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THE NEW YORKER

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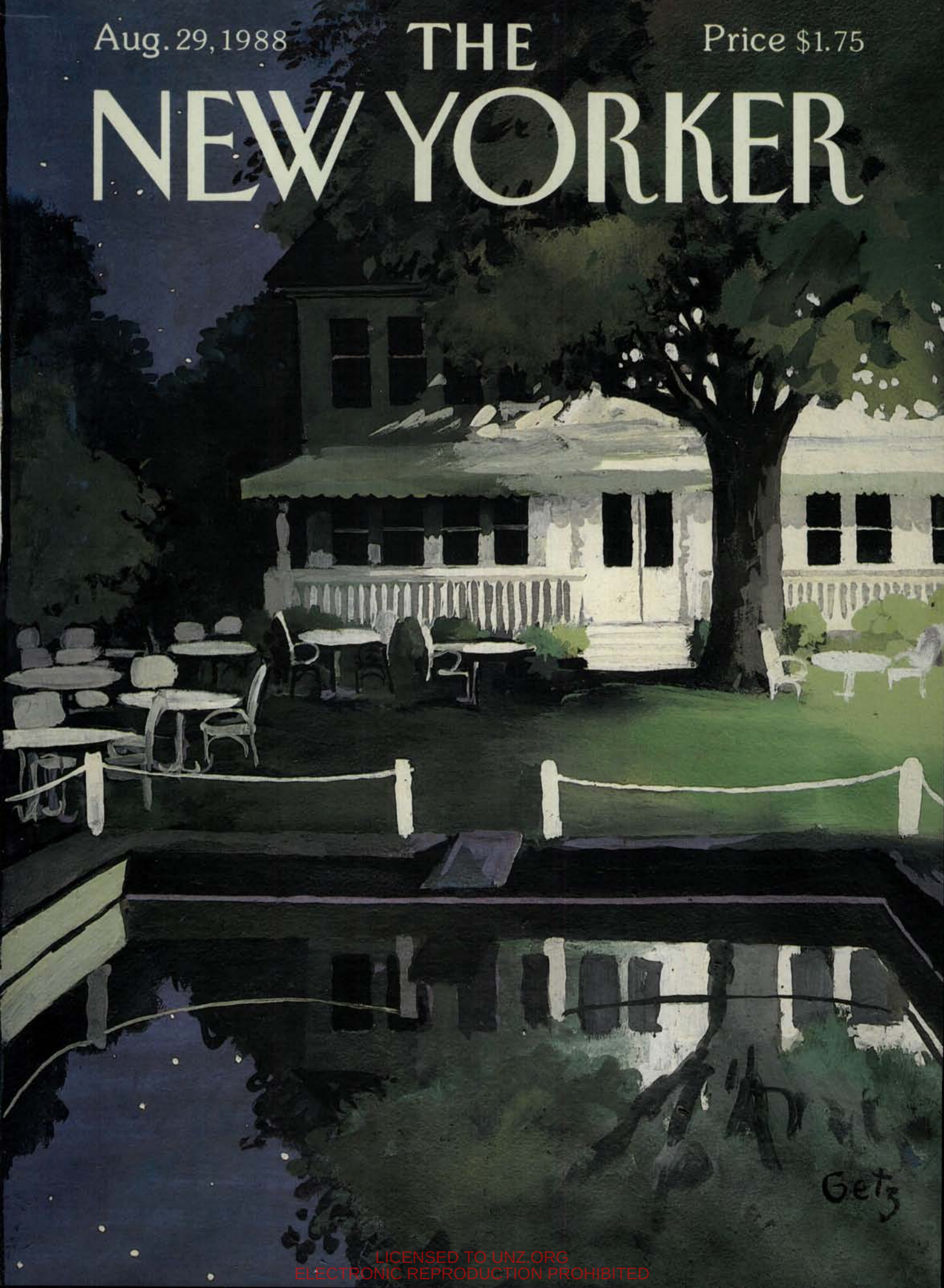

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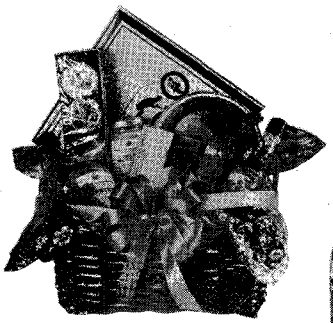

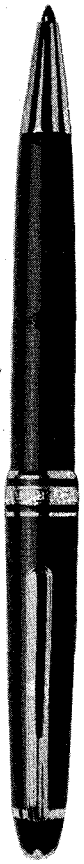

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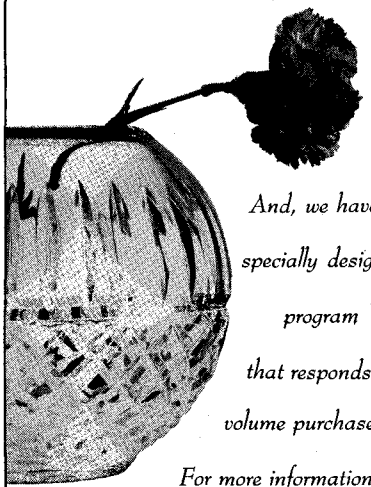

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE

PLAYS AND MUSICALS

AIN'T MISBEHAVIN'—A revival, after ten years, of this celebration of the music and the comic spirit of Fats Waller, in all its beauty and variety, as conceived and directed by Richard Maltby, Jr. The members of the original company are present and just as dynamic as they were the first time around. They are Nell Carter, Andre De Shields, Armelia McQueen, Ken Page, and Charlaine Woodard. The invaluable (and protean) Luther Henderson, conductor and arranger, again presides at the piano. (Ambassador, 215 W. 49th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 3.)

CHECKMATES—A comedy by Ron Milner. With Ruby Dee, Marsha Jackson, Denzel Washington, and Paul Winfield; directed by Woodie King, Jr. (46th Street Theatre, 226 W. 46th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

GODSPELL—A revival of the 1971 musical by Stephen Schwartz and John-Michael Tebelak. (Lambs, 130 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

M. BUTTERFLY—David Henry Hwang's funny, mysterious, and often beautiful play is based on an actual case. A French diplomat takes as his mistress a star of the Beijing Opera, and some twenty years later—when they are both charged with being spies—discovers that "she" is a he. David Dukes is the diplomat, and B. D. Wong gives an exceptional performance as his lover. Lori Tan Chinn, George N. Martin, and Rose Gregorio give them sound support. (Reviewed in our issue of 4/4/88.) (Eugene O'Neill, 230 W. 49th St. 246-0220. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

THE MISTRESS OF THE INN—Carlo Goldoni's 1753 play, with Tovah Feldshuh. (Roundabout, 100 E. 17th St. 420-1883. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays at 2. Closes Sunday, Sept. 11.)

NEGRO ENSEMBLE COMPANY—Presenting **FROM THE MISSISSIPPI DELTA**, a play by Endesha Ida Mae Holland, which was seen last fall at the Henry Street Settlement. (Theatre Four, 424 W. 55th St. 246-8545. Wednesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 8:30; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Saturdays at 3 and Sundays at 2:30.)

THE NIGHT OF THE IGUANA—A revival of Tennessee Williams' play about some startling events that take place in a rickety hotel on the Mexican coast and the outlandish characters who assemble there. Jane Alexander acts the role of the proprietress with an engaging relish, but it is Maria Tucci, remarkable as a spinster artist, who gives the performance strength and focus. (7/11/88) (Circle in the Square, 50th St. west of Broadway. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

PAUL ROBESON—A stirring production of Phillip Hayes Dean's stirring biographical drama. Avery Brooks, the sole actor present, gives a performance that far transcends impersonation, and Ernie Scott is a strong presence at the piano. Direction by Harold Scott. (South Street Theatre, 424 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Tuesday through Saturday at 8. Matinée Sunday at 3. Closes Sunday, Aug. 28.)

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA—The much ballyhooed Andrew Lloyd Webber musical is fun—if you're not bothered by theatre that cares not a whit for words and contains not one ghost of an idea. Except for the sets (by Maria Björnson), everything about the show is negligible, including the overhyped performance of Michael Crawford in the title role. (2/8/88) (Majestic, 245 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

ROAD—This poignant and exhilarating new

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play by Jim Cartwright takes the audience on a night prowl through a Lancashire slum and, by implication, on a spiritual tour of depressed Thatcherite England. The play is performed promenade style (the audience has the option of sitting or joining the actors on stage) by an exceptionally able cast. The production is not seamless, but it features some amazingly good acting, most notably from Kevin Bacon, Michael Wincott, and Jayne Haynes. Lincoln Center produced this interesting piece of theatre, which was directed by Simon Curtis, of the Royal Court Theatre in London. (8/15/88) (La Mama Annex, 66 E. 4th St. 475-7710. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8, and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Saturdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

THE ROAD TO MECCA—An absorbing, if somewhat elusive, play by the South African dramatist Athol Fugard, about an aging woman sculptor who is mystical and independent, and who resists the attempts of a local minister to persuade her to go into an old-people's home. With Yvonne Bryceland, Mr. Fugard himself, and Kathy Bates, as a young disciple of the sculptor. Mr. Fugard directed. (4/25/88) (Promenade, Broadway at 76th St. 580-1313. Nightly, except Sundays and Monday, Aug. 29, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.)

ROMANCE/ROMANCE—A pair of charming one-act musicals that have travelled successfully from Off to Broadway. Scott Bakula and Alison Fraser are as romantic as required in the leading roles. Barry Harman wrote the clever books and lyrics, and Keith Herrmann wrote the engaging scores. Mr. Harman directed. (5/16/88) (Helen Hayes, 240 W. 44th St. 944-9450. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

SPEED-THE-PLOW—David Mamet's satire on Hollywood is just as scathing, just as acute as his "Glengarry Glen Ross," and even funnier, if that can be imagined. Under the direction of Gregory Mosher, Joe Mantegna and Ron Silver give stunning performances as a pair of sleazy producers, and Madonna does well, too, as a wide-eyed secretary. Starting Tuesday, Aug. 30, David Rasche, Bob Balaban, and Felicity Huffman replace Mr. Mantegna, Mr. Silver, and Mrs. Penn. (5/16/88) (Royale, 242 W. 45th St. 239-6277. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.)

LONG RUNS—ANYTHING GOES: This exuberant revival is primarily a celebration of Cole Porter himself. The company, which includes Bill McCutcheon, Howard McGillin, Patti LuPone, and Kathleen Mahony-Bennett, does more than justice to the words and score. (Vivian Beaumont, Lincoln Center. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **BROADWAY BOUND:** A rueful comedy in which Neil Simon studies the middle-class depths from which he sprang and has kept springing. Joan Rivers plays Eugene Jerome's mother. (Broadhurst, 235 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **BURN THIS:** A play by Lanford Wilson, with Eric Roberts as a foulmouthed restaurant manager who woos and wins his dead brother's dancing partner. Scott Glenn takes over the role starting Monday, Aug. 29. (Plymouth, 236 W. 45th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **CATS:** Some twenty poems about cats by T. S. Eliot, set to music by Andrew Lloyd Webber. A mighty spectacle about mighty little, owing its effectiveness to Trevor Nunn's direction and to the sets and costumes by John Napier. (Winter Garden, Broadway at 50th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **A CHORUS LINE:** A group of young dancers audition for a handful of chorus jobs in a show not yet in rehearsal, and by the time the evening is over we know everything about all of them. (Shubert, 225 W. 44th St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2.) . . . **DRIVING MISS DAISY:** Frances Sternhagen and Earle Hyman star in Alfred Uhry's play, which tells of the growing attachment of a cranky old woman in Atlanta to her black chauffeur. Directed by Ron Lagomarsino. (John Houseman, 450 W. 42nd St. 564-8038. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **THE FANTASTICKS:** The longest long run recently turned twenty-eight. (Sullivan Street Playhouse, 181 Sullivan St., at Bleecker St. 674-3838. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **42ND STREET:** A musical based on the old Warner Brothers movie, and by no means an improvement on it. Directed and choreographed by the late Gower Champion. (St. James, 246 W. 44th St. 398-0280. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8:15. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2:15, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **FRANKIE AND JOHNNY IN THE CLAIR DE LUNE:** Carol Kane and Bruce Weitz in Terrence McNally's enchanting comedy about sex and the sudden onset of love in an apartment on Tenth Avenue. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8, and Saturdays at 7 and 10. Matinées Wednesdays at 2:30 and Sundays at 3.) . . . **INTO THE WOODS:** This musical by Stephen Sondheim and James Lapine is an attempt to show what lurks beneath the surface of conventional fairy tales. The songs are beautiful or funny—sometimes both. With Dick Cavett as the Narrator. Directed by Mr. Lapine. (Martin Beck, 302 W. 45th St. 246-6363. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **ME AND MY GIRL:** An infelicitously rehabilitated British musical out of the thirties, with Jim Dale. (Marquis, Broadway at 45th St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **LES MISÉRABLES:** Tim Shew and Norman Large star in the musical adaptation of the Victor Hugo novel, but the real standouts of the production are the settings, by John Napier, and the lighting, by David Hersey. (Broadway Theatre, Broadway at 53rd St. 239-6200. Nightly, except Sundays, at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2.) . . . **NUNSENSE:** A musical comedy by Dan Goggin. (Douglas Fairbanks, 432 W. 42nd St. 239-4321. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **OIL CITY SYMPHONY:** Mike Craver, Mark Hardwick, Debra Monk, and Mary Murfitt, gifted and sophisticated singers and instrumentalists, appear as a quartet of dedicated hicks reuniting at their small-town high school in this very funny musical. Starting Tuesday, Aug. 30, Michelle Horman replaces Miss Monk. (Circle in the

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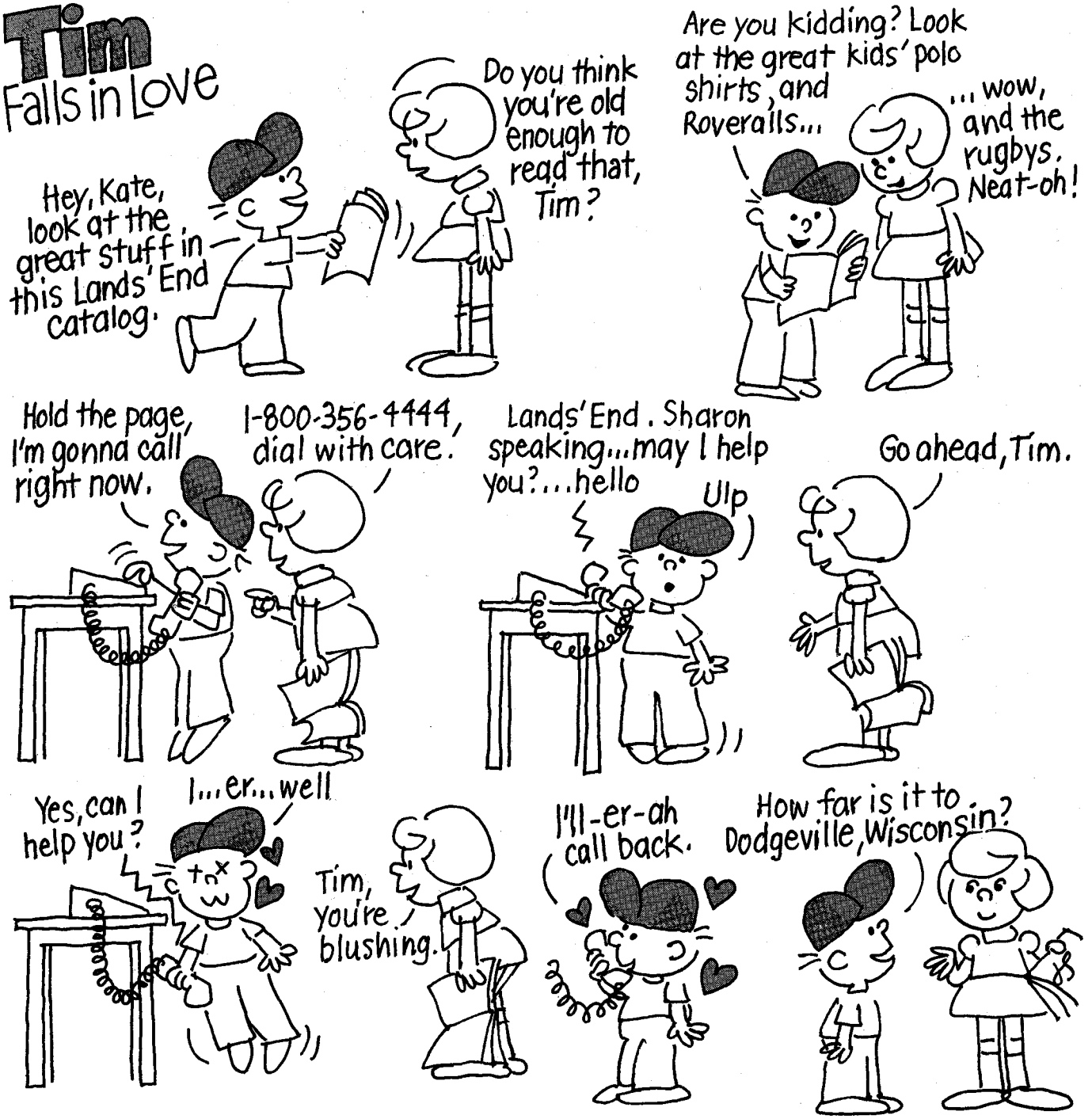
Tim Falls in Love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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE THEATRE–Cont'd

Square Downtown, 159 Bleecker St. 254-6330. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.) . . . **SARAFINA!:** This South African musical, an explosion of talent, was conceived, written, and directed by Mbongeni Ngema, who also, with Hugh Masekela, composed and arranged the score. The acting, dancing, and singing, to a local form of popular music called Mbaqanga, are a wonder. (Cort, 138 W. 48th St. 239-6200. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **A SHAYNA MAIDEL:** A well-wrought and deeply moving play by Barbara Lebow about a Polish-Jewish family torn apart by the events of the Hitler era. The production is beautifully directed by Mary B. Robinson. Bring lots of Kleenex to this one, but expect to leave uplifted. (Westside Arts, 407 W. 43rd St. 541-8394. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **STARLIGHT EXPRESS:** A bore on roller skates. (Gershwin, 51st St. west of Broadway. 586-6510. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3.) . . . **STEEL MAGNOLIAS:** This first play by Robert Harling is set in a beauty shop in a small town in Louisiana and consists mainly of the often amusing, wisecracking chatter of the proprietress, her assistant, and four steady customers. (Lucille Lortel, 121 Christopher St. 924-8782. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 6 and 10; and Sundays at 7:30. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

MISCELLANY

FESTIVAL LATINO IN NEW YORK—This theatrical *celebración* concludes with performances of Charles Gomez's play "Bang Bang Blues." In English. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Wednesday through Sunday, Aug. 24-28, at 8.)

STRANGER HERE MYSELF—Angelina Réaux in a one-woman revue of twenty songs by Kurt Weill. (Public, 425 Lafayette St. 598-7150. Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday at 8, and Sunday at 7. Closes Sunday, Aug. 28.)

WITHOUT YOU I'M NOTHING—Sandra Bernhard in a one-woman show. (Orpheum, 126 Second Ave., at 8th St. 477-2477. Wednesdays and Thursdays at 8; Fridays and Saturdays at 8 and 10:30; and Sundays at 5:30 and 9.)

JACKIE MASON'S "THE WORLD ACCORDING TO ME!"—The comedian's one-man show. (Brooks Atkinson, 256 W. 47th St. 719-4099. Wednesdays through Saturdays, and Monday, Aug. 29, at 8. Matinées Wednesdays at 2 and Sundays at 3.)

TEN PERCENT REVUE—A musical revue by Tom Wilson Weinberg about gay life. (Actors Playhouse, 100 Seventh Ave. S. 691-6226. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 4.)

THE TAFFETAS—A revue of songs from the early fifties. Four female singers reprise the hits of Rosemary Clooney, Jo Stafford, the Lennon Sisters, and others. (Cherry Lane, 38 Commerce St. 989-2020. Tuesdays through Fridays at 8; Saturdays at 7 and 10; and Sundays at 7. Matinées Sundays at 3.)

DANCE

GEORGIAN STATE DANCE COMPANY—A troupe of eighty-one Russian folk dancers. (Mark Hellinger Theatre, 237 W. 51st St. 246-0102. Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8. Matinées Wednesdays and Saturdays at 2, and Sundays at 3. Through Sunday, Sept. 4.)

NIGHT LIFE

(A highly arbitrary listing, in which bold-face type is used to pick out a few of the more notable performers in town. . . . ¶ Musicians and night-club proprietors live complicated lives that are subject to last-minute change; it is therefore always advisable to call ahead.)

BALLROOM, 253 W. 28th St. (244-3005)—A big, soigné cabaret on the edge of Chelsea, in the heart of the fur and fashion-student districts. **BLOSSOM DEARIE,** whose wee voice is a subtle instrument, sings her funny songs and her delicately pitched songs of rue at six-thirty Wednesdays through Saturdays. A musical-comedy trio from London called Fascinating Aida performs at nine Tuesdays through Saturdays.

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BIRDLAND, 2745 Broadway, at 105th St. (749-2228)—A fledgling jazz operation that takes its name from the long-gone midtown pleasure dome (1949-65). It's a cool person's kind of habitat: it has pastel walls, tile floors, a high ceiling, and is lightly forested. Drummer **LEROY WILLIAMS** leads a trio on Wednesday, Aug. 24; bassist **MICHAEL FORMANEK** brings in a quartet on Thursday, Aug. 25; and Beth Winter sings on Friday and Saturday, Aug. 26-27. Music from nine Sundays through Thursdays, and from nine-thirty Fridays and Saturdays. Dining.

BLUE NOTE, 131 W. 3rd St., near Sixth Ave. (475-8592)—A really blue but not really New York jazz club; the idea for the brass plaques that are engraved with the names of visiting jazz stars and embedded in the blue tables appears to have been borrowed from Hollywood. **KLAUS SUONSAARI,** a twenty-eight-year-old Finnish drummer, leads a band on Monday, Aug. 22; an organ-and-sax soul-jazz combo run by **JIMMY MC GRIFF** and **HANK CRAWFORD** is here Tuesday through Sunday, Aug. 23-28. First set at nine. Dining.

BOTTOM LINE, 15 W. 4th St., at Mercer St. (228-6300)—On the east side of the building, behind a dusty display window, there's a New York *Post* review of a Santana concert that took place here circa 1978; curatorial neglect seems to have made it a permanent exhibit. Inside, it's **JOHN RENBOURN** and **STEFAN GROSSMAN,** an Anglo-American folk-blues guitar duo, on Friday, Aug. 26; **JOHNNY CLEGG & SAVUKA,** a South African pop band, on Tuesday, Aug. 30; and the **TANNAHILL WEAVERS,** a Glasgow quartet that plays traditional Celtic dance music and gentle, drumless folk-rock, on Wednesday, Aug. 31. Shows Sundays through Thursdays at eight and eleven, and Fridays and Saturdays at eight-thirty and eleven-thirty.

BRADLEY'S, 70 University Pl., at 11th St. (228-6440)—A neighborhood bar, famous in this precinct and the wider world for its pianists, bassists, and, lately, horn players; a barstool sometimes serves as a good viewing perch, and sometimes doesn't (standees abound on peak nights). **BARRY HARRIS,** a bop-rooted pianist who knows his Parker and Powell like the backs of his hands, has custody of the piano through Saturday, Aug. 27; **GENE TAYLOR** is on bass. **JIMMY KNEPPER,** a studious-looking gent who plays the trombone with unstudied ease, leads a trio on Sunday, Aug. 28. Music from nine-forty-five. Dining.

CARLOS I, 432 Sixth Ave., at 10th St. (982-3260)—Long communal tables swathed in pink and a bandstand panelled in oak. **AHMAD JAMAL,** a pianist whose effusions are meant to be seen, will be on view, with his trio, Tuesday through Sunday, Aug. 23-28. Jamal is an entertainer, and even his silences, which once seemed expressive in a jittery, modern way, are florid. **HENRY BUTLER,** a New Orleans-born pianist who sometimes takes a break from the keyboard (he thunders, and likes to go at demon-fast tempos) to sing a gospel tune, comes in with a quartet on Tuesday, Aug. 30. Mondays belong to baritone-sax man **HAMIET BLUIETT** and his big band. Music from nine-thirty.

FAT TUESDAY'S, 190 Third Ave., at 17th St. (533-7902)—There's not a lot of elbow- or headroom in this downstairs jazz club, but the musicians sometimes make you forget all about it. Drummer **CHICO HAMILTON** directs a quartet Tuesday through Sunday, Aug. 23-28; hard-bop tenor man **GEORGE COLEMAN** brings in a foursome on Tuesday, Aug. 30. On Mondays, guitarist-inventor **LES PAUL,** the Thomas Edison of reverb, leads a trio. Music from eight. Dining.

FORTUNE GARDEN PAVILION, 209 E. 49th St. (753-0101)—A satisfying combination of Chinese food and homegrown music. Rubberneckers may see the moon wheeling by the greenhouse roof on its nightly tour of romantic Manhattan. **KENNY BARRON,** a cool-headed post-bop pianist, is on duty Tuesday through Sunday, Aug. 23-28; **DAVE MC KENNA,** a hard-swinging "barroom pianist" (his term) from (originally) Woonsocket, R.I., begins a four-night stand on Monday, Aug. 29. Music from nine-thirty Mondays through Saturdays, and from seven on Sundays.

J'S, 2581 Broadway, at 97th St. (666-3600)—An Upper West Side music room, one flight up from the hurly-burly. **DICK SUDHALTER,** a cornettist and a champion of jazz from the age of Bix, leads a trio on Wednesday, Aug. 24; guitarist, singer, and WNEW disk jockey **JOHN PIZZARELLI** is here with his threesome on Thursday, Aug. 25; and Judy Barnett, who is the person to whom the "J" refers, sings on Friday, Aug. 26. Ms. Barnett and her staff go fishing from Aug. 27 through Sept. 12. Music from eight Monday through Thursday, and from nine on Friday. Dining.

JAN WALLMAN'S, 49 W. 44th St. (764-8930)—A cozy room for singers and their followers, cheek by jowl with the Iroquois Hotel. Mondays are in the hands of **ARTHUR SIEGEL,** a veteran music-theatre man whose sets might include something from "Yokel Boy" (a 1939 Broadway show remembered chiefly for Phil Silvers), or a medley of songs about java or spinach (Irving Berlin wrote something about each), or the title number to "Cowboy from Brooklyn" (a 1938 movie starring Dick Powell as a "cowboy" crooner). Tuesdays belong to **DICK SUDHALTER'S** trio; and Wednesdays are claimed by John Gabriel, known to watchers of the soap opera "Ryan's Hope" as Seneca Beaulac. Shows at nine and eleven. Dining. Closed Sundays.

KNICKERBOCKER, 33 University Pl., at 9th St. (228-8490)—A busy corner bar and restaurant with a piano at the center of things. Two pianists who have worked with Gerry Mulligan—**BILL MAYS** and **BILL CHARLAP**—will be here back-to-back. Mays is on duty Tuesday through Saturday, Aug. 23-27, and Charlap takes over on Tuesday, Aug. 30. **HARVIE SWARTZ** is the bassist for both. Pianist **HARRY CONNICK, JR.,** the latest good news from New Orleans, flies all by himself on Sundays and Mondays. Music from nine-thirty.

KNITTING FACTORY, 47 E. Houston St., near Mulberry St. (219-3055)—A second-floor retreat that features avant-garde jazz, advanced and unadvanced rock, medicinal teas, medicinal beer, and space to think your thoughts in. **SONNY SHARROCK,** a raucous, bare-knuckled jazz-noise guitarist, leads a band on Wednesday, Aug. 24; tenor saxophonist **FRANK LOWE** brings in a quintet on Thursday, Aug. 25; and Friday and Saturday, Aug. 26-27, belong to **HUGO LARGO,** a kind of chamber-rock quartet (it consists of two bassists, a violinist, and a vocalist) that produces misty dream sounds at very slow, poetic tempos. Music after nine. Closed Monday through Wednesday, Aug. 29-31.

LONE STAR CAFÉ, 61 Fifth Ave., at 13th St. (242-1664)—This hangout for homesick Texans, French tourists, and local yokels brags that it's "the biggest and best honky-tonk north of Abilene." Big it ain't, but it does feature some genuine honky-tonk music, a souvenir stand, and TV monitors (which permit you to

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watch the action onstage in case your view of it is obscured by a cowboy or a structural element). Three first-generation Chicago bluesmen—guitarists JIMMY RODGERS and HUBERT SUMLIN and pianist PINETOP PERKINS—will be around on Monday, Aug. 22; on Tuesday, Aug. 30, TERRANCE SIMIEN & THE MALLET PLAYBOYS, a youthful zydeco outfit, share the stage with CLARENCE (GATEMOUTH) BROWN, a sixty-four-year-old Texan who plays fine country fiddle and finer blues guitar. Music after nine. Hot vittles. Closed Sunday, Aug. 28.

LONE STAR CAFÉ ROADHOUSE, 240 W. 52nd St. (245-2950)—The midtown branch of the aforementioned establishment. The façade is a Silver Eagle bus, the kind your itinerant musician cat tools around in. The inside features some stuff you probably wouldn't find in a county-line roadhouse—like a wall full of deluxe Gibson guitars—and some you might expect to find: beer, neon beer signs, and men wearing dozer caps. Most of the music—rock, country, blues—is provided by local talent. Shows after nine. Dining.

MICHAEL'S PUB, 211 E. 55th St. (758-2272)—Not far from this pub's gabbing crowds, a string band modelled after Django Reinhardt's Hot Club quintet performs. FRANK VIGNOLA, a fleet young guitarist from Long Island, is the Reinhardt of the group; they'll be joined by a ham named PHOEBE LÉGÈRE, whose assorted talents (she plays piano and accordion, has a voice of impressive size, and does campy variations on a red-hot-mama theme) have made her a favorite in downtown spas as well as in swell rooms such as this one. Sets at nine and eleven through Saturday, Aug. 27. Thursdays through Saturdays, JOAN RIVERS, a professional gabber, talks to you at around eleven-thirty, after the young people have retired for the night. Dining. Closed Sundays.

MIKELL'S, 760 Columbus Ave., at 97th St. (864-8832)—A spiffy uptown bar and restaurant, with signed photographs of some swinging non-musicians on the walls (Reggie Jackson smiling shyly, Dave Winfield tuning up in the cage) and some heavy hitters on the bandstand. Two former associates of latter-day Miles Davis—saxophonist BOB BERG and guitarist MIKE STERN—head up a band Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 24-25; Cuban alto saxophonist PAQUITO D'RIVERA brings in his Latin bop combo on Friday and Saturday, Aug. 26-27. Music from about ten until two.

RED BLAZER TOO, 349 W. 46th St. (262-3112)—A big, busy, theatre-district establishment devoted to traditional jazz (big- and little-band Swing, several varieties of Dixieland). Music from six on Sundays, from eight-thirty Mondays through Thursdays, and from nine Fridays and Saturdays.

RITZ, 119 E. 11th St. (254-2800)—Fifty years ago, people practiced the jitterbug and the foxtrot in this ballroom; today's patrons listen mainly to rock, which issues from speakers the size of mobile homes, and sometimes engage in a combination of exercise and intimacy known as slam dancing. JOHNNY CASH, who prefers slower, country tempos (the better to accommodate his low, plain, sincere voice), has the floor on Friday, Aug. 26, along with his wife, JUNE CARTER CASH, and their son, John Carter Cash. Shows begin at nine Sundays through Thursdays, and at eleven Fridays and Saturdays.

SOUNDS OF BRAZIL, 204 Varick St., at W. Houston St. (243-4940)—A big, cheerful room, painted a light tropical blue, where you can pick 'em up and set 'em down to sounds from Brazil, Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. Ample seating for the contemplative. The schedule: Tuesday, Aug. 23, HENRY THREADGILL & THE SOCIETY SITUATION DANCE BAND; Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 24-25, reggae singer SUGAR MINOTT; Friday and Saturday, Aug. 26-27, a Cape Verde samba band called Les Anges; Tuesday, Aug. 30, Oliver DeCoque's Nigerian pop band; and Wednesday, Aug. 31, Dominican pianist MICHEL CAMILO'S trio and PAQUITO D'RIVERA'S band. Music from nine Tuesdays through Thursdays and from ten on Fridays and Saturdays. Dining. Closed Sundays and Mondays.

SPEAKEASY, 107 Macdougal St. (598-9670)—A central Village lounge for folkies and others who practice low-decibel (but not necessarily low-voltage) music. ROD MAC DONALD, a Village folkie with a pleasant tenor and some serious things to say about the bomb and the establishment and modern romance, will be here Friday and Saturday, Aug. 26-27. Shows nightly from about eight-thirty. Dining.

SWEET BASIL, 88 Seventh Ave. S., at Bleecker St. (242-1785)—ABDULLAH IBRAHIM, a South African pianist and composer, will be in this Village temple of jazz (pressed-tin ceiling, grainy b. & w. photos of your favorite demigods, knee-to-knee seating) Tuesday through Sunday, Aug. 23-28, with his swaying septet, EKAYA. Guitarist JOHN SCOFIELD comes in with bassist ANTHONY COX and drummer TERRI LYNE CARRINGTON on Tuesday, Aug. 30. Shows from ten. Dining.

TRAMPS, 125 E. 15th St. (777-5077)—"Irish" is what the canopy above the entrance to this bar says, but rock and roll is what the boys and girls in the back room mainly do. Veteran Chicago bluesman OTIS RUSH picks and shouts on Friday and Saturday, Aug. 26-27. Shows after nine-thirty.

VILLAGE GATE, 160 Bleecker St. (475-5120)—In the gym-size downstairs room, Latin-jazz bands play for enthusiastic fans on Mondays after nine-thirty. On Aug. 29, the bill includes TITO PUENTE'S combo and a young vibist named Vesta Maxey. Tuesday through Sunday, Aug. 23-28, belongs to the DIRTY DOZEN BRASS BAND, a New Orleans octet whose repertoire runs from traditional parade-band tunes to Ellington, Monk, and its own strutting funk numbers. DR. JOHN, a specialist in swamp fevers and blues, brings in his Louisiana Lumenoids on Tuesday, Aug. 30. Sets at nine-thirty and eleven-thirty.

VILLAGE VANGUARD, 178 Seventh Ave. S., at 11th St. (255-4037)—People from all over the world descend the stairs to this ancient jazz club; many of them later emerge from it in an excited condition. DON CHERRY is here Tuesday through Sunday, Aug. 23-28, with his pocket trumpet (with which he sometimes constructs miniature, spiky melodies), two of his mates from the 1959 Ornette Coleman quartet (bassist CHARLIE HADEN and drummer BILLY HIGGINS), and Texas tenor saxophonist JAMES CLAY. ILLINOIS JACQUET, whose name alone suggests coattails flying, enters with his big band on Tuesday, Aug. 30. Mondays are prime time for MEL LEWIS'S big band. Music from ten.

WEST END, 2911 Broadway, at 113th St. (666-8750)—The big room in this student rest stop (Columbia U. is across the street) has a non-institutional cafeteria, a bar that can seat a marching band, and a jukebox. The smaller room has tables, booths, a couple of hanging plants, and live jazz. Vibraphonist JAY HOGGARD leads a quartet Wednesday through Sunday, Aug. 24-28. On Mondays, comedians stand up and fall down. Shows from about nine.

ZINNO, 126 W. 13th St. (924-5182)—If you like pictures of cows, there's a good one here, by the British painter Malcolm Morley, of some Holsteins adrift in a Turneresque landscape. There's also jazz, which flows peaceably from a passageway between the front-room bar and the back-room restaurant. RUBY BRAFF, a cornettist who makes you lean forward when he descends into the secret chamber that is his lower register and sit up when he rises to a rare high note, works with guitarist James Chirillo and bassist MICHAEL MOORE through Saturday, Aug. 27, and with Moore and pianist JOHN CAMPBELL starting Monday, Aug. 29. Music from eight. Closed Sundays.

JAZZ / ROCK / PERSONAL APPEARANCES / PERFORMANCE ART, ETC.

STEVIE WONDER—Radio City Music Hall, Sixth Ave. at 50th St. 757-3100. Monday and Tuesday, Aug. 22-23, Thursday through Sunday, Aug. 25-28, and Wednesday and Thursday, Aug. 31-Sept. 1, all at 8.

STING—Madison Square Garden. 563-8300. Wednesday, Aug. 24, at 8.

RALF RALF—In "The Summit." (Dance Theatre Workshop, 219 W. 19th St. 924-0077. Wednesdays through Saturdays at 8. Through Saturday, Sept. 3.)

DAVE BRUBECK QUARTET—Jazzport, 210 Front St. 608-7889. Friday and Saturday, Aug. 26-27, at 8 and 10.

WHITNEY HOUSTON—Madison Square Garden. Saturday, Aug. 27, at 8.

AC/DC—Madison Square Garden. Tuesday, Aug. 30, at 8.

P.S. 122—Eric Bogosian. (Thursday and Friday, Aug. 25-26, at 9, and Saturday, Aug. 27, at 9 and 11. Through Saturday, Sept. 3.) . . . ¶ Ethyl Eichelberger. (Thursday through Sunday, Aug. 25-28, at 9:30.) (150 First Ave., at 9th St. 477-5288.)

ART

(Unless otherwise noted, galleries are open Mondays through Fridays from around 10 or 11 to between 5 and 6.)

GALLERIES

JOSÉ CAMPECHE (1751-1809)—A Puerto Rican who recorded the high society of San Juan in his portraits. Forty-seven of his paintings are currently on view at the Metropolitan Museum. Through Sept. 25. (Museo del Barrio, 1230 Fifth Ave., at 104th St. Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 5.)

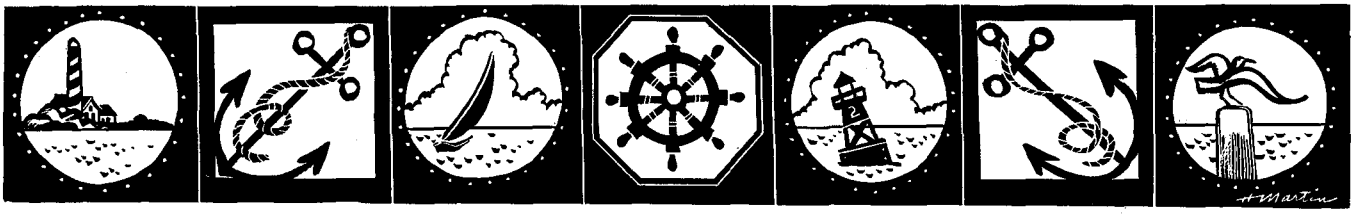
NANCY GRAVES / JOHN WALKER—Small-scale sculptures in sterling silver. / Monoprints. Through Sept. 2. (Knoedler, 19 E. 70th St.)

OLIVER JOHNSON—New paintings and drawings. Through Sept. 30. (Felicie, 141 E. 56th St.)

GROUP SHOWS—At the ASSOCIATED AMERICAN ARTISTS, 20 W. 57th St.: Etchings and lithographs—including works by John Sloan, Yvonne Jacquette, and Adolf Dehn—depicting city mavens engaged in a variety of nocturnal activities. Through Sept. 2. . . . DAVIDSON, 415 West Broadway: Still-lifes on canvas and on paper by Carol Anthony, Deborah Deichler, Janis Goodman, Ruth Miller, and George Stave. Through Sept. 2. . . . GIBSON, 568 Broadway: Paintings in various mediums, including works by Merrill Wagner and Suzan Etkin. Through Friday, Aug. 26. (Closed Mondays.) . . . GRAHAM, 1014 Madison Ave., at 78th St.: Paintings by Eleanor de Laittre, Alice Trumbull Mason, and Agnes Weinrich, among others. Through Oct. 1. . . . HERSTAND, 24 W. 57th St.: Sculptures and drawings by Constantin Brancusi, Isamu Noguchi, and Jenny Lee, among others. Through Sept. 24. ¶ Exhibitions of works by gallery artists can also be seen at DAVIS & LANGDALE, 231 E. 60th St. . . . GALERIE ST. ETIENNE, 24 W. 57th St. (Closed Mondays.) . . . HOFFMAN, 429 West Broadway. . . . KATZEN-BROWN, 475 Broome St. . . . MARCUS, 578 Broadway. (Closed Mondays.) . . . NOSEI, 100 Prince St. . . . PRETTO, 103 Sullivan St. (Opens at 1 Tuesdays through Saturdays.) . . . HOLLY SOLOMON, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St. . . . WASHBURN, 41 E. 57th St.

PHOTOGRAPHY

JOAN FONTCUBERTA—Photographs by an artist whose work is collaged and frottaged. Through



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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

ART–Cont'd

Sept. 10. (Zabriskie, 724 Fifth Ave., at 57th St.)

Robert Mapplethorpe—The Whitney Museum has mounted a show of his photographs. See below, under "Museums," for dates and times.

Garry Winogrand (1928-84)—Black-and-white photographs dating from the fifties, sixties, and seventies. Through Wednesday, Aug. 31. (Pace-MacGill, 11 E. 57th St. Open Saturdays.)

International Center of Photography, 1130 Fifth Ave., at 94th St.—"Collaboration in Recent American Photography," including works by Laurie Simmons and Allan McCollum, Clegg & Guttmann, and Suzanne Hellmuth and Jock Reynolds. . . . ¶ Photographs of North Korea by the Japanese photographer Hiroji Kubota. Both shows through Sept. 11. (Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Fridays, noon to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 11 to 6.)

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Metropolitan Museum, Fifth Ave. at 82nd St.—A hundred and fifty pieces of American silver, dating from the seventeenth century to the present. The exhibition includes works by Paul Revere and Tiffany & Co. Through Oct. 30. . . . ¶ Religious paintings and portraits by the eighteenth-century Puerto Rican artist José Campeche. Through Sept. 25. Works by the artist are also at the Museo del Barrio. (The Metropolitan is open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays through Sundays, 9:30 to 5:15, and Tuesday evenings until 8:45.)

Museum of Modern Art, 11 W. 53rd St.—"Deconstructivist Architecture," drawings, models, and site plans by Coop Himmelblau, Peter Eisenman, Frank Gehry, Zaha M. Hadid, Rem Koolhaas, Daniel Libeskind, and Bernard Tschumi. The chief organizer of the exhibit was Philip Johnson, who describes these architects as having eschewed harmony, unity, and clarity for the sake of disharmony, fracturing, and mystery. Through Tuesday, Aug. 30. . . . ¶ Landscapes rendered by Nachume Miller in paintings and works on paper. Through Oct. 11. (Open daily, except Wednesdays, 11 to 6, and Thursday evenings until 9.) . . . **NOTE:** The summer series of free concerts in the sculpture garden, at 14 W. 54th St., will conclude on Friday and Saturday, Aug. 26-27, at 7:30, when works by John Cage and Erik Satie will be played by musicians from the Juilliard School, and René Clair's film "Entr'acte" will be shown. The gates open at 6.

Guggenheim Museum, Fifth Ave. at 89th St.—A retrospective of works by Georges Braque. Through Sept. 11. . . . ¶ A loan show of sixty modern paintings from the National Gallery in Prague, consisting entirely of works that are in America for the first time. The artists include Cézanne, Chagall, Klimt, Gauguin, and Matisse, and their Czech counterparts. Through Sept. 18. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 11 to 7:45, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 11 to 4:45.)

Whitney Museum of American Art, Madison Ave. at 75th St.—Frank Gehry's architecture is surveyed in more than two hundred and fifty drawings, photographs, and models. The projects represented include the Fishdance Restaurant in Kobe, Japan, and the Laser Laboratory Building at the University of Iowa in Iowa City. Also on display are several walk-through constructions. Through Oct. 2. . . . **PHOTOGRAPHY:** Fifteen years' worth of Robert Mapplethorpe's prints are represented in a show of nudes, portraits, and still-lifes. Through Oct. 23. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 1 to 8, with no admission charge after 6; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 11 to 5; Sundays, noon to 6.)

Brooklyn Museum, Eastern Parkway—"The Uses of Photography in Contemporary Art," a small exhibit from the permanent collection, with works by Julie Wachtel, Ellen Carey, and David Hockney. Through Oct. 10. . . . ¶ Photographs Walter Rosenblum took in Haiti in 1958 and 1959. Through Sept. 7. (Open daily, except Tuesdays, 10 to 5.)

American Museum of Natural History, Central Park W. at 79th St.—Fossils from China—including several dicynodonts that are about two hundred and fifty million years old—along with some of their North American counterparts taken from the museum's collection. (Open daily. Hours: Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Sundays, 10 to 5:45; Wednesdays, 10 to 9; Fridays and Saturdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5.)

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28	29	30	31			

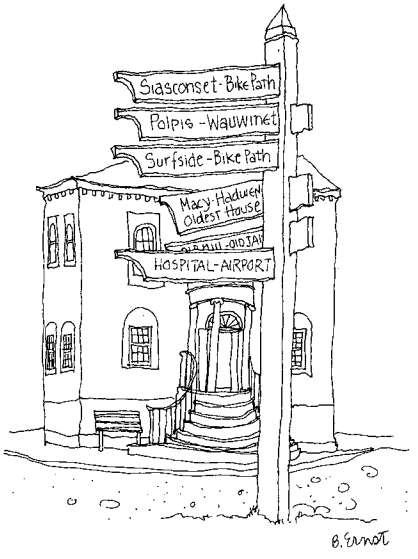
American Craft Museum, 40 W. 53rd St.—A show on the contemporary partnership between artists and architects, focussing on the artists' contributions. There are, for instance, stone seats by Scott Burton that are like those he made for the Equitable Center, and objects in glass by three artists who worked on the redesigned Rainbow Room. Through Wednesday, Aug. 31. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 8, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Sundays, 10 to 5.)

Cooper-Hewitt Museum, Fifth Ave. at 91st St.—"Unbuilt Architecture of the Eighties," including models, drawings, and photographs by Philip Johnson, Alice Aycock, and Antoine Predock. Through Oct. 16. . . . ¶ The museum's garden is currently dotted with lawn chairs in every conceivable style. These bizarre—but comfortable—pieces are the work of thirty-one San Francisco Bay Area artists, including Martha Schwartz, Veronica di Rosa, and Daniel Friedlander. Through Sept. 18. (Open daily except Mondays. Hours: Tuesdays, 10 to 9, with no admission charge after 5; Wednesdays through Saturdays, 10 to 5; Sundays, noon to 5.)

Grolier Club, 47 E. 60th St.—A retrospective of etchings, woodcuts, and lithographs by the English painter Graham Sutherland (1903-1980). The prints range from pastoral landscapes to expressionistic renderings of birds and insects. Through Sept. 30. (Open Mondays through Fridays, 10 to 5.)

Jewish Museum, Fifth Ave. at 92nd St.—A show in which Jewish themes are explored in video art: installations by Juan Downey, Beryl Korot, and Grahame Weinbren and Roberta Friedman, mounted in separate galleries; and six videos that run on a single, continuous tape for just over two hours, including "Harold's Bar Mitzvah," by Bart Friedman, and "Women in the Camps," by Barbara Rosenthal. Through Sept. 1. (Open daily except Fridays and Saturdays. Hours: Mondays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, noon to 5; Tuesdays, noon to 8, with no admission charge from 5 to 8; Sundays, 11 to 6.)

Studio Museum in Harlem, 144 W. 125th St.—"The Portrayal of the Black Musician in American Art," a show of paintings, sculptures, and lithographs dating from 1830 to 1970. Through Sunday, Aug. 28. (Open daily except Mondays and Tuesdays. Hours: Wednesdays through Fridays, 10 to 5; Saturdays and Sundays, 1 to 6.)



SPORTS

Baseball—Mets at Shea Stadium (1-718 507-8499): Vs. San Francisco, Friday, Aug. 26, at 7:35; Saturday, Aug. 27, at 7:05; and Sunday, Aug. 28, at 1:35. . . . ¶ San Diego, Monday and Tuesday, Aug. 29-30, at 7:35, and Wednesday, Aug. 31, at 1:35.

Racing—At **Belmont:** Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1; from Wednesday, Aug. 31, through Monday, Oct. 17. The Gazelle Handicap, Wednesday, Aug. 31. . . . **Monmouth Park,** Oceanport, N.J.: Weekdays at 1:30; through Saturday, Sept. 3. The Philip H. Iselin Handicap, Saturday, Aug. 27. . . . **Atlantic City Race Course,** McKee City, N.J.: Mondays and Wednesdays through Saturdays at 7:15; through Saturday, Sept. 3. . . . **Saratoga:** Daily, except Tuesdays, at 1:30; through Monday, Aug. 29. The Hopeful, Saturday, Aug. 27; the John A. Morris Handicap, Sunday, Aug. 28; and the Spinaway, Monday, Aug. 29.

Tennis—United States Open Championships. (U.S.T.A. National Tennis Center, Flushing Meadow. Monday and Tuesday, Aug. 29-30, at 11; and Wednesday, Aug. 31, at 11 and 7:35. Through Sunday, Sept. 11. For information about tickets, call 1-718 271-5100.)

Trotting—At **Yonkers Raceway:** Weeknights at 8, and Tuesdays at 1. . . . **Saratoga Raceway,** Saratoga Springs: Weeknights at 7:45.

MUSIC

New York City Opera—Tuesday evening, Aug. 23: "Mefistofele," with Frances Ginsberg, John Cheek, and Robert Grayson; conducted by Sergiu Comissiona. . . . ¶ Wednesday evening, Aug. 24: "Lucia di Lammermoor," with Erie Mills, Michael Sylvester, William Stone, and Harry Dworchak; Scott Bergeson. . . . ¶ Thursday evening, Aug. 25: "The Merry Widow," with Leigh Munro, Ruth Golden, Richard White, and Gran Wilson; Imre Pallo. . . . ¶ Friday evening, Aug. 26: "Madame Butterfly," with Marianna Christos, Jane Bunnell, Stefano Algieri, and William Parcher; Imre Pallo. . . . ¶ Saturday matinée, Aug. 27: "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," with Erie Mills, Jane Shaulis, Robert Orth, and Gran Wilson; Sergiu Comissiona. . . . ¶ Saturday evening, Aug. 27: "La Bohème," with Elizabeth Holleque, Faith Esham, William Parcher, Stanley Wexler, and Michael Willson; Scott Bergeson. . . . ¶ Tuesday and Wednesday evenings, Aug. 30-31: "Naughty Marietta," with alternating casts; Scott Bergeson conducting. (New York State Theatre. 870-5570. Evenings at 8. Matinées Saturdays at 2. Through Sunday, Nov. 20.)

Mostly Mozart Festival—Final performances of the series—Monday, Aug. 22, at 8: Kurt Masur conducting the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra in two symphonies and a cello concerto by Haydn. With Heinrich Schiff, cello. . . . ¶ Tuesday and Wednesday, Aug. 23-24, at 8: Gerard Schwarz conducting the Festival Orchestra, and Joseph Flummerfelt directing the Festival Chorus in a program that includes Haydn's "Lord Nelson Mass." With vocal and instrumental soloists. . . . ¶ Thursday, Aug. 25, at 8: The Beaux Arts Trio in a Mozart-Haydn-Mendelssohn program. . . . ¶ Friday and Saturday, Aug. 26-27, at 8: Gerard Schwarz conducting the Festival Orchestra in an all-Mozart program. With Richard Goode, piano, and Cho-Liang Lin, violin. (Avery Fisher Hall. 874-2424.)

New York City Gay Men's Chorus—Gary Miller conducting. (St. Peter's Church, Lexington Ave. at 54th St. Wednesday, Aug. 24, at 8. No tickets necessary.)

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

New York Shakespeare Festival—Free performances of **King John,** with Mariette Hartley, Kevin Conway, and Moses Gunn. The second of two productions presented in the Delacorte Theatre this summer. (Central Park near W. 81st St. Nightly, except Mondays, at 8. Through Sunday, Sept. 4. For information about tickets, which are required, call 861-7277.)

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Music Cruises—Monday, Aug. 22: Kevin Eubanks, with the Larry Coryell quintet. . . . Monday, Aug. 29: Ray Barretto, Dave Valentin, Larry Coryell, and Noel Pointer. (On the De Witt Clinton, South Street Seaport, Pier 16, East River at Fulton St. The boat leaves at 7 and 10. For information about tickets, call 406-3434.) . . . ¶ Saturday, Aug. 27: Queen Ida & the Bon Temps Zydeco Band. (Hudson River Dayliner, Pier 81, Twelfth Ave. at 41st St. The boat boards at 8 and sails at 9. For tickets, call 947-5850.)

Damrosch Park, Lincoln Center—Tuesday, Aug. 23, at 8:15: Iso. . . . ¶ Saturday, Aug. 27: Sister Sadie and the Famous Biblettes at noon; Little Buster at 1; Daryle Ryce at 2; Big Boy Henry at 3; the Chris Caine band at 4; John Cephas and Phil Wiggins at 5; the Gospel Christian Singers at 6; the Persuasions at 7; Johnny Copeland at 8; and John Lee Hooker at 9. . . . ¶ Sunday, Aug. 28: Sally Rogers and Howard Bursen at noon; Sotavento at 1; Cindy Kallet at 2; Horse Sense at 3; Laurie Lewis and the Grant Street Band at 4; Schooner Fare at 5; Leon Bibb at 6; Christine Lavin at 7; Sylvia Tyson and John Herald at 8; and Oscar Brown, Jr., at 9. . . . ¶ Monday, Aug. 29, at 8:15: The Harmonie Ensemble, conducted by Steven Richman, in a tribute to Leonard Bernstein and Morton Gould.

Music Festival on the Pier—The Miller beer people's summer series. Wednesday, Aug. 24: Joan Armatrading. . . . ¶ Thursday, Aug. 25: The Robert Cray Band. . . . ¶ Saturday, Aug. 27: Miles Davis and the John McLaughlin trio. . . . ¶ Monday, Aug. 29: George Benson and Dianne Reeves. (Pier 84, Twelfth Ave. at 45th St. Evenings at 7:30. For information about tickets, call 249-8870.)

Prospect Park Band Shell—Friday, Aug. 26: The Bhundu Boys, with Akyene Baako. . . . ¶ Saturday, Aug. 27: Carl McDonald & Reggae for Freedom, with Dexter Daley and Jam-X. (Evenings at 8. For rain-date information, call 1-718 768-0699.)

Central Park Band Shell—Friday, Aug. 26, at 8:30: Quentin Crisp. . . . ¶ Saturday, Aug. 27, at 3: A. Leroy & Mimi Goese, with Hugo Largo. . . . ¶ Sunday, Aug. 28, at 3: Bob Telson & Little Village. (Mid-Park at 72nd St. For rain-date information, call 860-1335.)

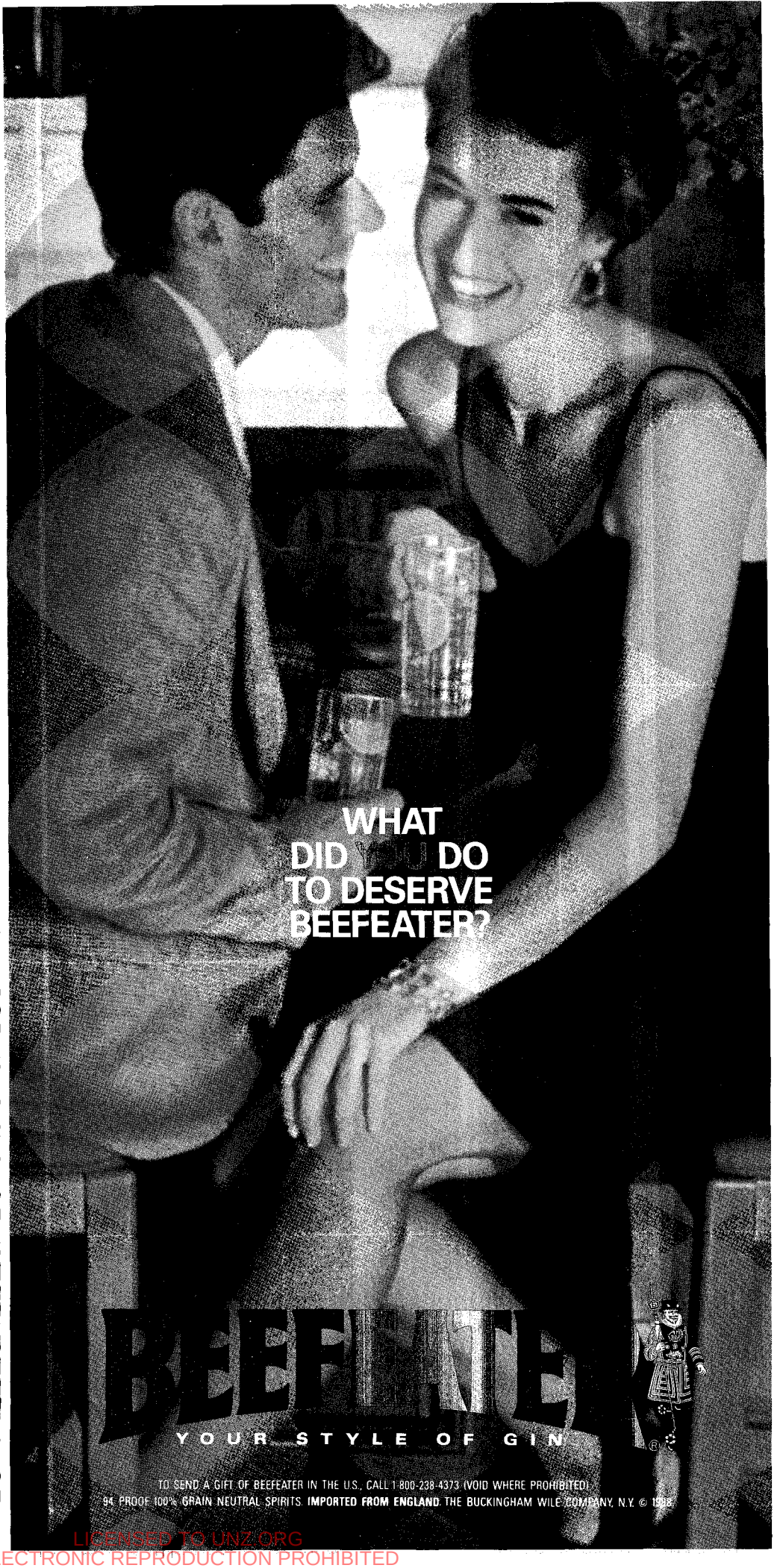
Riverside Park Rotunda—Saturday, Aug. 27, at 7: The New Music Consort. . . . ¶ Sunday, Aug. 28, at 4: Harvie Swartz & Urban Earth. (W. 79th St., near the Boat Basin.)

IN THE COUNTRY

Tanglewood—The final programs of the season celebrate Leonard Bernstein's seventieth birthday—Thursday, Aug. 25, at 8:30: Seiji Ozawa, John Williams, John Mauceri, and Michael Tilson Thomas conducting (seriatim) the Boston Symphony. . . . ¶ Friday, Aug. 26, at 9: Seiji Ozawa and Michael Tilson Thomas conducting the orchestra, with Midori, violin; Yo-Yo Ma, cello; and others. . . . ¶ Saturday, Aug. 27, at 8:30: A staged production of Bernstein's "Mass," performed by the Indiana University Opera Theatre and conducted by Robert Porco. . . . ¶ Sunday, Aug. 28, at 2:30: Leonard Bernstein conducting the Boston Symphony in a Haydn-Tchaikovsky program. (Lenox, Mass. For information about tickets, call 1-413 637-1600.)

Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival—Final performances—The David Parsons Company. (Becket, Mass. Tuesday through Thursday, Aug. 23-25, at 8; Friday, Aug. 26, at 8:30; and Saturday, Aug. 27, at 2 and 8:30. For information about tickets, call 1-413 243-0745.)

Saratoga Performing Arts Center—Final performances by the **Philadelphia Orchestra.** Wednesday evening, Aug. 24: Leonard Slatkin conducting, with Christopher Parkening, classical guitarist. . . . ¶ Thursday evening, Aug. 25: Leonard Slatkin conducting, with Emanuel Ax, piano. . . . ¶ Friday evening, Aug. 26: John Williams conducting works by Bernstein, Rodgers, Lloyd Webber, and himself. . . . ¶ Saturday evening, Aug. 27: Dennis Russell Davies conducting an all-Gershwin program, with vocal and instrumental soloists. (Saratoga Springs. Evenings at 8:15. For information about tickets, call 1-518 587-3330.) . . . **NOTE:** From Monday through Saturday, Aug. 22-27, the Merce Cunningham Dance Company will be performing in the Little Theatre.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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

THE MOVIE HOUSES

EAST SIDE

Public Theatre, 425 Lafayette St. (598-7171; theatre opens in the late afternoon and is closed Mondays.)
Through Aug. 25: Theatre closed.
From Aug. 26: (Separate admissions) "Cover-up: Behind the Iran-Contra Affair" (directed by Barbara Trent), a documentary; and "Don Giovanni" (1979; Joseph Losey; in Italian), with Ruggero Raimondi.

Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 36 E. 8th. (477-6600)
Theatre 1: "Die Hard" (†).
Theatre 2: "Clean and Sober" (Glenn Gordon Caron), with Michael Keaton and Kathy Baker.
Theatre 3: Through Aug. 25: "Clean and Sober." From Aug. 26: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

Gramercy, Lexington at 23rd. (475-1660)
"Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (†).

Bay Cinema, 2nd Ave. at 32nd. (679-0160)
Through Aug. 25: "Die Hard" (†).
From Aug. 26: To be announced.

Loews 34th Street Showplace, 238 E. 34th. (532-5544)
Theatre 1: "Married to the Mob" (†).
Theatre 2: "A Fish Called Wanda" (†).
Theatre 3: "Tucker: The Man and His Dream" (†).

34th St. East, 241 E. 34th. (683-0255)
"Cocktail" (Roger Donaldson), with Tom Cruise, Bryan Brown, and Elisabeth Shue.

Eastside Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 55th. (755-3020)
Through Aug. 25: (Matinées only) "Bambi" (†); and (evenings only) "The Dead Pool" (Buddy Van Horn), with Clint Eastwood.
From Aug. 26: "Hot to Trot" (Michael Dinner).

Sutton, 3rd Ave. at 57th. (759-1411)
"The Big Blue" (Luc Besson), with Rosanna Arquette and Jean-Marc Barr.

Gotham Cinema, 3rd Ave. at 58th. (759-2262)
"Big" (†).

Plaza, 42 E. 58th. (355-3320)
Through Aug. 23: "The Rescue" (Ferdinand Fairfax).
From Aug. 24: "Crossing Delancey" (Joan Micklin Silver), with Amy Irving and Peter Riegert.

Manhattan Twin, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (935-6420)
Theatre 1: "Midnight Run" (†).
Theatre 2: "Young Guns" (Christopher Cain), with Emilio Estevez.

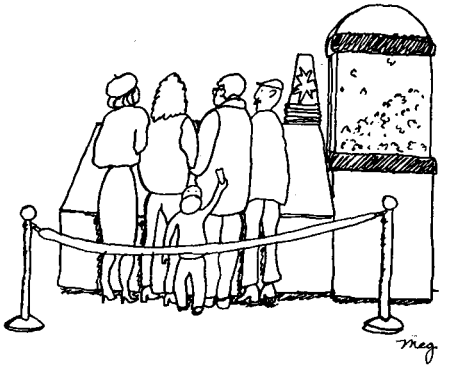
D. W. Griffith, 235 E. 59th. (759-4630)
Through Aug. 25: (Matinées only) "Mac and Me" (Stewart Raffill); and (evenings only) "Bull Durham" (†).
From Aug. 26: "Cocktail" (Roger Donaldson), with Tom Cruise, Bryan Brown, and Elisabeth Shue.

Baronet and Coronet, 3rd Ave. at 59th. (355-1663)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 25: "Die Hard" (†). From Aug. 26: "Stealing Home" (Steven Kampmann and Will Aldis), with Mark Harmon.
Theatre 2: "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (†).

Cinema I and II, 3rd Ave. at 60th. (753-6022/0774)
Theatre 1: "Pascali's Island" (James Dearden), with Ben Kingsley, Charles Dance, and Helen Mirren.
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 24: "Cocktail" (Roger Donaldson), with Tom Cruise, Bryan Brown, and Elisabeth Shue. From Aug. 25: "The Year My Voice Broke" (John Duigan).

Gemini I and 2, 2nd Ave. at 64th. (832-1670)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 25: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master" (Renny Harlin), with Robert Englund. From Aug. 26: "Hero and the Terror" (William Tannen), with Chuck Norris.
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 25: "Coming to America" (John Landis), with Eddie Murphy. From Aug. 26: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

Beekman, 2nd Ave. at 66th. (737-2622)
"Clean and Sober" (Glenn Gordon Caron), with Michael Keaton and Kathy Baker.



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28	29	30	31			

FILMS ACCOMPANIED BY A DAGGER ARE DESCRIBED IN THE "IN BRIEF" SECTION, STARTING ON PAGE 12.

Loews New York Twin, 2nd Ave. at 67th. (744-7339)
Theatre 1: "Married to the Mob" (†).
Theatre 2: "Tucker: The Man and His Dream" (†).

68th St. Playhouse, 3rd Ave. at 68th. (734-0302)
"Mr. North" (Danny Huston), with Anthony Edwards.

Loews Tower East, 3rd Ave. at 71st. (879-1313)
"A Fish Called Wanda" (†).

U. A. East, 1st Ave. at 85th. (249-5100)
Through Aug. 25: "Young Guns" (Christopher Cain), with Emilio Estevez.
From Aug. 26: "Stealing Home" (Steven Kampmann and Will Aldis), with Mark Harmon.

Loews Orpheum I and 2, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (289-4607)
Theatre 1: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master" (Renny Harlin), with Robert Englund.
Theatre 2: "Coming to America" (John Landis), with Eddie Murphy.

86th Street East Twin, 3rd Ave. at 86th. (249-1144)
Theatre 1: "Die Hard" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 25: "Cocktail" (Roger Donaldson), with Tom Cruise, Bryan Brown, and Elisabeth Shue. From Aug. 26: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.

WEST SIDE

Film Forum I and 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatres open in the late afternoon.)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 30: "The Burglar" (1987; directed by Valery Ogorodnikov; in Russian). From Aug. 31: "The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat" (1987; Christopher Rawlence).
Theatre 2: See listings under "Revival Houses."

Bleecker St. Cinema I and 2, 144 Bleecker St. (674-2560)
Theatre 1: "The Beer Drinker's Guide to Fitness and Filmmaking" (Fred G. Sullivan).
Theatre 2: (Separate admissions) "Late Summer Blues" (Renen Schorr; in Hebrew); and "Family Viewing" (Atom Egoyan).

Waverly I and 2, 6th Ave. at 3rd. (929-8037)
Theatre 1: "Young Guns" (Christopher Cain), with Emilio Estevez.
Theatre 2: "Cocktail" (Roger Donaldson), with Tom Cruise, Bryan Brown, and Elisabeth Shue.

8th St. Playhouse, 52 W. 8th. (674-6515; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Through Aug. 25: "The Blob" (Chuck Russell), with Kevin Dillon and Shawnee Smith.
From Aug. 26: "Hot to Trot" (Michael Dinner).

Art Greenwich Twin, Greenwich Ave. at 12th. (929-3350)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 25: "Big" (†). From Aug. 26: "Stealing Home" (Steven Kampmann and Will Aldis), with Mark Harmon.
Theatre 2: "Midnight Run" (†).

Quad Cinema, 34 W. 13th. (255-8800)
Theatre 1: "Coming to America" (John Landis), with Eddie Murphy.
Theatre 2: "A Summer Story" (Piers Haggard), with Imogen Stubbs and James Wilby.
Theatre 3: "Alice" (†).
Theatre 4: "A World Apart" (†).

23rd St. West Triplex, 333 W. 23rd. (989-0060)
Theatre 1: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master" (Renny Harlin), with Robert Englund.
Theatre 2: "Midnight Run" (†).
Theatre 3: "The Big Blue" (Luc Besson), with Rosanna Arquette and Jean-Marc Barr.

Guild, 33 W. 50th. (757-2406)
"Mac and Me" (Stewart Raffill).

Ziegfeld, 141 W. 54th. (765-7600)
"The Last Temptation of Christ" (Martin Scorsese), with Willem Dafoe.

Festival, 6 W. 57th. (307-7856)
Through Aug. 23: "A World Apart" (†).
From Aug. 24: "A Handful of Dust" (†).

57th St. Playhouse, 110 W. 57th. (581-7360)
"The Wash" (Michael Toshiyuki Uno).

Carnegie Hall Cinema, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (265-2520)
"A Summer Story" (Piers Haggard), with Imogen Stubbs and James Wilby.

Carnegie Screening Room, 7th Ave. between 56th and 57th. (757-2131)
"Au Revoir les Enfants" ("Goodbye, Children") (†).

Paris, 4 W. 58th. (688-2013)
Through Aug. 23: "A Handful of Dust" (†).
From Aug. 24: "Bandits" (Claude Lelouch; in French).

Cinema 3, 2 W. 59th. (752-5959)
Through Aug. 25: "White Mischief" (†).
From Aug. 26: To be announced.

Loews Paramount, B'way at 61st. (247-5070)
"A Fish Called Wanda" (†).

Lincoln Plaza I, 2, and 3, B'way at 63rd. (757-2280)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 25: "Commissar" (1967; Alexander Askoldov; in Russian). From Aug. 26: "The Thin Blue Line" (Errol Morris).
Theatre 2: "Bagdad Café" (†).
Theatre 3: "Boyfriends and Girlfriends" ("L'Ami de Mon Amie") (†).

Cinema Studio I and 2, B'way at 66th. (877-4040)
Theatre 1: "Babette's Feast" (†).
Theatre 2: "Wings of Desire" ("Der Himmel über Berlin") (†).

Regency, B'way at 67th. (724-3700)
Through Aug. 25: "Cocktail" (Roger Donaldson), with Tom Cruise, Bryan Brown, and Elisabeth Shue.
From Aug. 26: To be announced.

Embassy 72nd St. I and 2, B'way at 72nd. (724-6745)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 28: "Big" (†). From Aug. 29: Theatre closed.
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 28: "Bull Durham" (†). From Aug. 29: Theatre closed.

Loews 84th Street Sixplex, B'way at 84th. (877-3600)
Theatre 1: Through Aug. 25: "Coming to America" (John Landis), with Eddie Murphy. From Aug. 26 (tentative): "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.
Theatre 2: "Clean and Sober" (Glenn Gordon Caron), with Michael Keaton and Kathy Baker.
Theatre 3: "The Big Blue" (Luc Besson), with Rosanna Arquette and Jean-Marc Barr.
Theatre 4: "Tucker: The Man and His Dream" (†).
Theatre 5: "A Nightmare on Elm Street 4:

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The Dream Master" (Renny Harlin), with Robert Englund.
Theatre 6: "Married to the Mob" (†).

Metro Cinema I and 2, B'way at 99th. (222-1200)
Theatre 1: "Young Guns" (Christopher Cain), with Emilio Estevez.
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 25: "Bull Durham" (†). From Aug. 26: "Hot to Trot" (Michael Dinner).

Columbia Cinema, B'way at 103rd. (316-6660)
"Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (†).

Olympia I and II, B'way at 107th. (865-8128)
Theatre 1: "Midnight Run" (†).
Theatre 2: Through Aug. 25: "Die Hard" (†). From Aug. 26: "Stealing Home" (Steven Kampmann and Will Aldis), with Mark Harmon.

TIMES SQUARE AREA

Criterion Center, B'way at 44th. (354-0900)
Theatre 1: "Coming to America" (directed by John Landis), with Eddie Murphy.
Theatre 2: "Young Guns" (Christopher Cain), with Emilio Estevez.
Theatre 3: "The Blob" (Chuck Russell), with Kevin Dillon and Shawnee Smith.
Theatre 4: Through Aug. 25: "Coming to America." From Aug. 26: "Hot to Trot" (Michael Dinner).
Theatre 5: "Die Hard" (†).
Theatre 6: Through Aug. 25: "Monkey Shines: An Experiment in Fear" (George A. Romero). From Aug. 26: "Hero and the Terror" (William Tannen), with Chuck Norris.

Embassy I, B'way at 46th. (757-2408)
"Who Framed Roger Rabbit" (†).

Embassy 2, 3, and 4, 7th Ave. at 47th. (730-7262)
Theatre 2: "Married to the Mob" (†).
Theatre 3: Through Aug. 25: "Bambi" (†). From Aug. 26: "Betrayed" (Costa-Gavras), with Debra Winger and Tom Berenger.
Theatre 4: Through Aug. 25: "Cocktail" (Roger Donaldson), with Tom Cruise, Bryan Brown, and Elisabeth Shue. From Aug. 26: "Betrayed."

Loews Astor Plaza, 44th St. at B'way. (869-8340)
"A Nightmare on Elm Street 4: The Dream Master" (Renny Harlin), with Robert Englund.

Movieland, B'way at 47th. (757-8320)
"The Big Blue" (Luc Besson), with Rosanna Arquette and Jean-Marc Barr.

National Twin, B'way at 44th. (869-0950)
Theatre 1: "Clean and Sober" (Glenn Gordon Caron), with Michael Keaton and Kathy Baker.
Theatre 2: "Midnight Run" (†).

Warner, 7th Ave. between 42nd and 43rd. (764-6760)
Through Aug. 25: "The Dead Pool" (Buddy Van Horn), with Clint Eastwood.
From Aug. 26: To be announced.

REVIVAL HOUSES

Biograph Cinema, 225 W. 57th. (582-4582)
Aug. 22: "Weekend at the Waldorf" (1945; directed by Robert Z. Leonard), with Ginger Rogers, Walter Pidgeon, Lana Turner, and Van Johnson; and "We're Not Married" (1952; Edmund Goulding), with Ginger Rogers, Fred Allen, and Victor Moore.
Aug. 23-24: "Dancing Lady" (1933; Robert Z. Leonard), with Fred Astaire, Joan Crawford, Franchot Tone, and Clark Gable; and "Finian's Rainbow" (1968; Francis Ford Coppola), with Fred Astaire, Petula Clark, Keenan Wynn, Tommy Steele, and Al Freeman, Jr.
Aug. 25-27: "Stage Door" (†); and "Monkey Business" (1952; Howard Hawks), with Cary Grant, Ginger Rogers, Charles Coburn, and Marilyn Monroe.
Aug. 28-29: "Daddy Long Legs" (1955; Jean Negulesco), with Fred Astaire, Leslie Caron, Thelma Ritter, and Fred Clark; and "The Belle of New York" (1952; Charles Walters), with Fred Astaire and Vera-Ellen.
Aug. 30-31: "On the Beach" (†); and "Tight Spot" (1955; Phil Karlson), with Ginger Rogers, Edward G. Robinson, and Brian Keith.

Cinema Village, 22 E. 12th. (924-3363)
Through Aug. 23: Two programs of Warner Brothers cartoons shown each day.
Aug. 24-25: "Wall Street" (1987; Oliver Stone), with Michael Douglas, Charlie Sheen, Daryl Hannah, and Martin Sheen; and "Fatal Attraction" (1987; Adrian Lyne), with Michael Douglas, Glenn Close, and Anne Archer.
Aug. 26-27: "The Last Emperor" (1987; Bernardo Bertolucci), with John Lone.
Aug. 28: "The Eagle with Two Heads" (†), "Les Parents Terribles" (†), and "The Blood of a Poet" (†).
Aug. 29-30: Two programs of Warner Brothers cartoons shown each day.
From Aug. 31: "Emmanuelle" (1974; Just Jaeckin; in French), with Sylvia Kristel and Alain Cuny; and "Story of Sin" (1976; Walerian Borowczyk; in Polish).

Film Forum 2, 57 Watts St. (431-1590; Mondays through Fridays, theatre opens in the late afternoon.)
Aug. 22: "Metropolis" (1926; Fritz Lang; a German silent film), with Brigitte Helm; and "The Woman in the Moon" (1929; Fritz Lang; a German silent film), with Fritz Rasp.
Aug. 23: A program of Max and Dave Fleischer Superman cartoons from 1941 and 1942.
Aug. 24: "Jason and the Argonauts" (1963; Don Chaffey), with Todd Armstrong and Nancy Kovack; and "Jack the Giant Killer" (1962; Nathan Juran), with Kerwin Mathews and Judi Meredith.
Aug. 25: "Queen of Outer Space" (1958; Edward Bernds), with Zsa Zsa Gabor and Eric Fleming; and "Attack of the 50-Foot Woman" (1958; Nathan Hertz), with Allison Hayes and William Hudson.
From Aug. 26: A program of fantasy and science-fiction animated films.

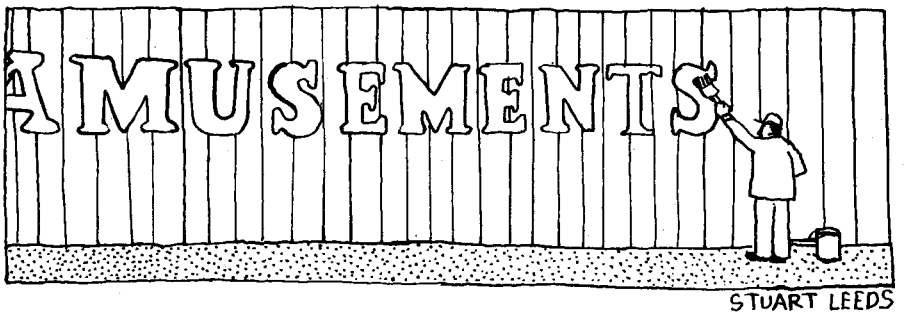
Thalia SoHo, 15 Vandam St. (675-0498)
Aug. 22: "Union Station" (1950; Rudolph Maté), with William Holden, Lyle Bettger, Nancy Olson, and Barry Fitzgerald; and "D.O.A." (1950; Rudolph Maté), with Edmond O'Brien.
Aug. 23: "Keep on Rockin' " (1973), a film of the Sept. 1969 Toronto Rock and Roll concert; and "Rock Around the Clock" (1956; Fred F. Sears), with Johnny Johnston, Alan Freed, and Bill Haley and His Comets.
Aug. 24: "Beyond the Forest" (1949; King Vidor), with Bette Davis, Joseph Cotten, and David Brian; and "The Fountainhead" (1949; King Vidor), with Gary Cooper, Patricia Neal, and Raymond Massey.
Aug. 25: "Fury" (1936; Fritz Lang), with Spencer Tracy, Sylvia Sidney, Edward Ellis, and Walter Brennan; and "American Guerrilla in the Philippines" (1950; Fritz Lang), with Tyrone Power and Micheline Presle.
Aug. 26-27: "The World According to Garp" (†) and "Popeye" (†).
Aug. 28: "Nights of Cabiria" (1957; Federico Fellini; in Italian), with Giulietta Masina; and "Margaret of Cortona" (1950; Mario Bonnard; in Italian), with Maria Frau.
Aug. 29: "I Married a Monster from Outer Space" (1958; Gene Fowler), with Tom Tryon and Gloria Talbott; and "Strange Invaders" (1983; Michael Laughlin), with Nancy Allen and Paul Le Mat.
Aug. 30: "Suspect" (1987; Peter Yates), with Cher, Dennis Quaid, Liam Neeson, and John Mahoney; and "The Big Easy" (1987; Jim McBride), with Dennis Quaid, Ellen Barkin, and Ned Beatty.
Aug. 31: "Carrie" (1952; William Wyler), with Jennifer Jones, Laurence Olivier, Miriam Hopkins, and Eddie Albert; and "The Divorce of Lady X" (†).

Theatre 80 St. Marks, 80 St. Marks Pl. (254-7400)
Aug. 22: "Playtime" (1968) and "Mr. Hulot's Holiday" (1953), both films directed by, and with, Jacques Tati.
Aug. 23: "The Painted Veil" (1934; Richard Boleslavsky), with Greta Garbo, Herbert Marshall, and George Brent; and "Mata Hari" (1932; George Fitzmaurice), with Greta Garbo, Ramon Novarro, and Lionel Barrymore.
Aug. 24: "The Lady Eve" (1941; Preston Sturges), with Barbara Stanwyck, Henry Fonda, and Charles Coburn; and "No Time for Comedy" (1940; William Keighley), with Rosalind Russell and James Stewart.
Aug. 25: "Salome, Where She Danced" (1945; Charles Lamont), with Yvonne De Carlo, Rod Cameron, Albert Dekker, and Walter Slezak; and "Bird of Paradise" (†).
Aug. 26-27: "Jezebel" (†) and "The Letter" (1940 †).
Aug. 28: "The Seven Samurai" (1954; Akira Kurosawa; in Japanese), with Toshiro Mifune.
Aug. 29: "Vampyr" (1932; Carl Dreyer; in German), with Julian West, Henriette Gérard, Rena Mandel, and Sybille Schmitz; and "Day of Wrath" (1943; Carl Dreyer; in Danish).
Aug. 30: "He Who Gets Slapped" (1924; Victor Seastrom; a silent film), with Lon Chaney, Norma Shearer, and John Gilbert; and "The Man Who Laughs" (†).
Aug. 31: "Bulldog Drummond Comes Back" (1937; Louis King) and "Bulldog Drummond's Peril" (1938; James Hogan), both with John Howard as Drummond.

FILM LIBRARIES, ETC.

Museum of Modern Art, Roy and Niuta Titus Theatres, 11 W. 53rd St. (708-9490; a limited number of tickets are available to those applying for them in person at the museum after 11 on the day of the showing).

Theatre I: Aug. 22 at 2:30: "One Million B.C." (1940; directed by Hal Roach, Sr., and Hal Roach, Jr.), with Victor Mature, Carole Landis, and Lon Chaney, Jr. . . . ¶ Aug. 22 at 6: "Strange Illusion" ("Out of the Night;" 1945; Edgar G. Ulmer), with James Lyon, Warren William, and Regis Toomey; and "The Shining Future" (1944; LeRoy Prinz), a short film. . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 2:30: "Glorifying the American Girl" (1929; Millard Webb), with Mary Eaton and Dan Healey. . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 6: "Dark Command" (1940; Raoul Walsh), with Claire Trevor, John Wayne, and Walter Pidgeon. . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 2:30: "Dark Waters" (1944; André de Toth), with Merle Oberon, Franchot Tone, and Thomas Mitchell. . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 6: "The Strange Affair of Uncle Harry" (1945; Robert Siodmak), with George Sanders, Geraldine Fitzgerald, and Ella Raines. . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 2:30: "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm" (1917; Marshall Neilan; a silent film), with Mary Pickford, Eugene O'Brien, and Wesley Barry; and "Humoresque" (1920; Frank Borzage; a silent film), with Alma Rubens and Gaston Glass. . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 6: "The Love Light" (1921; Frances Marion; a silent film), with Mary Pickford and Fred Thomson. . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 2: "Dark Command." . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 5: "Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm" and "Humoresque." . . . ¶ Aug. 28 at 2: "It's in the Bag!" (1944; Richard Wallace), with Fred Allen, Binnie Barnes, Robert Benchley, and Jack Benny. . . . ¶ Aug. 28 at 5: "The Devil and Miss Jones" (1941; Sam Wood), with Jean Arthur, Robert Cummings, and Charles Coburn. . . . ¶ Aug. 29 at 2:30: "The Love Light." . . . ¶ Aug. 29 at 6: "The



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MOVIE HOUSES—Cont'd

Strange Affair of Uncle Harry." . . . ¶ Aug. 30 at 2:30: "The Devil and Miss Jones." . . . ¶ Aug. 30 at 6: "It's in the Bag!"

THEATRE 2: Theatre closed.

FILM SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER—A retrospective of films that have opened at the New Directors/New Films series and later films by some of the same directors. Aug. 22 at 6:15: "A Walk Through H" (1977; Peter Greenaway) and "Vertical Features Remake" (1978; Peter Greenaway). . . . ¶ Aug. 22 at 8:30: "The Draughtsman's Contract" (1982; Peter Greenaway). . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 6:15: "Chan Is Missing" (1981; Wayne Wang). . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 8:30: "Dim Sum" (1984; Wayne Wang). . . . ¶ Aug. 24 at 6:15: "Funny Dirty Little War" (1983; Hector Olivera; in Spanish). . . . ¶ Aug. 24 at 8:30: "They Don't Wear Black Tie" (1981; Leon Hirzman; a Brazilian film, in Portuguese). . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 6:15: "The Family Game" (1983; Yoshimitsu Morita; in Japanese). . . . ¶ Aug. 25 at 8:30: "Sorekara" (1986; Yoshimitsu Morita; in Japanese). . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 6:15: "Joe's Bed-Stuy Barbershop: We Cut Heads" (1983; Spike Lee) and "Mix-Up" (1985; Françoise Romand). . . . ¶ Aug. 26 at 8:45: "She's Gotta Have It" (1986; Spike Lee). . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 2: "Witness to War" (1984; Deborah Shaffer and David Goodman) and "Witness to Apartheid" (1986; Sharon Sopher). . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 4:15: "Sugar Cane Alley" (1983; Euzhan Palcy; in French). . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 6:30: "The Sugarland Express" (1974; Steven Spielberg). . . . ¶ Aug. 27 at 9: "Empire of the Sun" (1987; Steven Spielberg). . . . ¶ Aug. 28 at 2: "La Salamandre" (1971; Alain Tanner; in French). . . . ¶ Aug. 28 at 4:30: "In the White City" (1982; Alain Tanner; in Portuguese, French, and English). . . . ¶ Aug. 28 at 7: "The Road Warrior" (1981; George Miller). . . . ¶ Aug. 28 at 9: "The Witches of Eastwick" (1987; George Miller). (Alice Tully Hall. 362-1911.)

FRENCH INSTITUTE—ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE, 22 E. 60th St. (355-6100)—Aug. 24 at 12:30, 3:15, 6, and 8:45: "Harvest" (1937; Marcel Pagnol; in French, with English subtitles), with Gabriel Gabrio, Orane Démazis, Marguerite Moreno, Fernandel, and Robert Le Vigan. . . . ¶ Aug. 31 at 12:15, 3:15, 6, and 9: "Letters from My Windmill" (1955; Marcel Pagnol; in French, with English subtitles), with Rellys, Robert Vattier, Henri Vilbert, Daxley, Pierrette Bruno, and Edouard Delmont.

CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, Amsterdam Ave. at 112th St. (662-2133)—Aug. 25 at 8: "The General" (1926; Buster Keaton; a silent film), with Keaton. Original organ score written and played by Lee Erwin.

MURDER, MYSTERY AND MAYHEM—The last in a series of films set in New York City during the thirties, forties, and fifties. Aug. 28 at 2: "Detective Story" (1950; William Wyler), with Kirk Douglas, Eleanor Parker, William Bendix, Lee Grant, and Horace McMahon. (New-York Historical Society, 170 Central Park W., at 77th St. 873-3400.)

MUSEUM OF BROADCASTING, 1 E. 53rd St. (752-7684)—"Woody Allen: The Television Work," featuring "The Kraft Music Hall: Woody Allen Looks at 1967" and a compilation of performances by and conversations with Allen from 1962 to 1977. Showings Tuesdays through Saturdays at 12:05, 1:45, and 3:30. . . . ¶ Aug. 23 at 5:30: "Together with Music" (1955), featuring Mary Martin and Noël Coward.

IN BRIEF

SEE ABOVE FOR THEATRE ADDRESSES AND TELEPHONE NUMBERS.
IF A MOVIE HAS BEEN REVIEWED IN "THE CURRENT CINEMA" DURING THE PAST TWO YEARS, THE DATE OF ITS REVIEW IS GIVEN.

(Unsigned notes are by Pauline Kael; others are by Terrence Rafferty.)

ALICE—The Czech animator Jan Švankmajer plays with objects the way Lewis Carroll played with words. He animates household items and worn-looking dolls, makes nonsense physical, palpable, and thus gives Alice's adventures in illogic an undertone of menace. The landscape of Alice's imagination is a domestic maze of doors, drawers, stairs, hallways, cabinets, shelves, and doll houses. And in this world—the half-familiar, half-obscure territory of the shut-in child—everything has a heightened, shockingly vivid presence. The director—a self-described "militant Surrealist," who has been making short films since 1964—brings a pessimistic, absurdist, Eastern European sensibility to bear on Carroll's material, and his approach sometimes seems overly formal, a little rigid. But this is an extraordinary piece of work. There are sequences that are small miracles of stop-motion animation: the White Rabbit has a pocket watch sewn into his tatty fur, so whenever he checks the time sawdust spills out of him and he has to close himself up with a safety pin; the Caterpillar, a woollen sock with a pair of glass eyes and a set of chattering false teeth, delivers his message to Alice and then, alarmingly, darns over his own eyes as he settles down to sleep. "Alice" is a brilliant demonstration of the connection between a child's imagination and the lonely, obsessive craftsmanship of a great animator. Alice is played by a big-eyed little girl named Kristýna Kohoutová; she's the only human being in the movie.—T.R. (Reviewed in our issue of 8/8/88.) (Quad Cinema.)

AU REVOIR LES ENFANTS ("Goodbye, Children")—It's set in Occupied France in 1944, when the writer-director Louis Malle was an eleven-year-old at a Catholic boys' boarding school near Fontainebleau that sheltered several Jewish boys. The Gestapo learned they were there, and sent the ones they found to Auschwitz, and the headmaster to a work camp. One of the Jewish boys was in Malle's class, but Malle didn't get to know him well and didn't realize that he was Jewish. For the dramatic purposes of the movie, he has conceived a close friendship between his alter ego, the fair-haired Julien Quentin (Gaspard Manesse), and the dark boy who is using the false name Jean Bonnet (Raphaël Fejtö). But nothing comes into clear focus—not the boys' attitudes, not even the images. The film (especially the first half) seems padded, formal, discreet. It's like watching a faded French classic. And there's something unseemly about the way Jean is used as an aesthetic object—spiritual, sensitive, exotic. With Francine Racette as Julien's mother and François Négret as the informer. In French. (2/22/88) (Carnegie Screening Room.)

BABETTE'S FEAST—In a village on Denmark's gray, blustery Jutland peninsula, sometime in the eighteen-eighties, Babette (Stéphane Audran), the French servant of a pair of elderly unmarried sisters (Birgitte Federspiel and Bodil Kjer), prepares a special dinner for her employers and their guests—a lavish, one-time-only orgy of haute cuisine served to a group of devout Lutherans who are used to receiving the Lord's bounty in the form of grim little slabs of boiled fish. Adapting one of Isak Dinesen's "Anecdotes of Destiny," Gabriel Axel, the writer-director, tells this simple tale simply. He establishes a lulling, bedtime-story tone right from the start, perhaps too successfully: our eyelids begin to seem very heavy after twenty minutes or so. The whole thing turns out to be about the consolations of art, and the union of "righteousness and bliss." The film is more righteous than blissful: a more austere celebration of the pleasures of the senses would be difficult to imagine. In Danish and French. —T.R. (Cinema Studio.)

BAGDAD CAFÉ—After an argument with her husband on a godforsaken stretch of highway at the edge of the Mojave Desert, a fat German tourist named Jasmin (Marianne Sägebrecht) checks into a crummy motel attached to the equally crummy Bagdad Café. This movie, the first in English by the German director Percy Adlon (whose 1985 "Sugarbaby" was also a vehicle for Sägebrecht), is filled with eccentrics who are apparently meant to be lovable. The rather precious conceit of the film is that Jasmin somehow brings the outcast characters together in a kind of extended family; by the end, the Bagdad Café has been transformed into a popular roadside cabaret, with everyone contributing a specialty (Jasmin does magic tricks). The American performers are trapped in a movie that treats them as merely exotic—waxwork grotesques waiting to be animated by a mysterious German touch. Eleonore Adlon and Christopher Doherty collaborated with the director on the screenplay. With CCH Pounder, Jack Palance, and Christine Kaufmann.—T.R. (Lincoln Plaza.)

BAMBI (1942)—None of the animals in this animated Disney feature has a gooier gaze than the little fawn, Bambi, who is still dependent on his mother. The mother-child relationship is so tender and close that when the mother is killed by hunters small children in the audience frequently scream and cry. It all ends happily when Bambi, grown to staghood, marries the virginally sweet doe Faline. The picture is a classic of sorts, if only for the uncannily awful sound of the young woodland creatures in conversation; when puberty sets in and these voices suddenly change, Walt Disney begins to seem as berserk as Busby Berkeley. Still, there's no denying that for many people some of the sequences (such as Bambi's birth) have an enduring primal power. From the Felix Salten novel. (Embassy; through Aug. 25. . . . ¶ Eastside Cinema; through Aug. 25, matinées only.)

BIG—A formula fantasy film that has been directed very gently and tactfully by Penny Marshall; she sleepwalks you through the script (by Gary Ross and Anne Spielberg) about a twelve-year-old boy who wishes he were big and is magically given the body of a man in his thirties—Tom Hanks. There are neat, flaky moments, but everything has a tepid inevitability, and even as you smile you may be groaning inwardly, because "Big" is dedicated to awakening the child in all of us. Of course, the Hanks character isn't ready to function as an adult; he wants to go back. The movie wants to go back, too. It's nostalgic for childhood, for suburbia, for innocent fun. (It isn't about kids wanting to be big; it's about grownups feeling little.) In its wholesome way, "Big" is selling the slick wonders of immaturity. With the slyly sexy Elizabeth Perkins, and good comic work by Robert Loggia and Jared Rushton. Also with John Heard, David Moscow, Jon Lovitz, and Mercedes Ruehl. (6/27/88) (Gotham Cinema. . . . ¶ Art Greenwich Twin; through Aug. 25. . . . ¶ Embassy 72nd St.; through Aug. 28.)

BIRD OF PARADISE (1932)—The director, King Vidor, and his associates performed near miracles on this outdated story about a Polynesian princess (Dolores Del Rio) whose love for a white man (Joel McCrea) results in her being punished by the Polynesian priests (she's thrown into a volcano). The talk is fearfully silly, but Clyde De Vinna's rich, tactile cinematography, the foliage of the locations, and Max Steiner's overblown score contribute to some high romantic effects. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug. 25.)

THE BLOOD OF A POET (1930)—Jean Cocteau's first film is an enigmatic account of a poet's dreams and ecstasies and obsession with the unknown, composed in four illogical, timeless sequences that happen in the instant that a chimney topples. The first time you see this film, you're likely to find it silly, autoerotic, static, absurd, and you may feel cheated after having heard so much about it. But though it may seem to have no depth, you're not likely to forget it—it has a suggestiveness unlike any other film. Almost twenty years later, in "Orpheus," Cocteau orchestrated the themes of the dreams and ecstasies of the poet. In French. (Cinema Village; Aug. 28.)

BOYFRIENDS AND GIRLFRIENDS ("L'Ami de Mon Amie")—The sixth, and last, in Eric Rohmer's series of "Comedies and Proverbs" is a light romantic comedy set in Cergy-Pontoise, an overdesigned and self-contained modern suburb of Paris. In this bourgeois Forest of Arden, four completely unremarkable young people—two women, two men—reshuffle their affections so that each winds up with the "right" partner in the end. It's essentially the same leisurely comedy of self-knowledge that Rohmer has been making for nearly twenty years, but this time he treats his themes with a frivolous, casual air. He takes pleasure in the cleanness and brightness of this world, in the contented buzz of shoppers and office workers and Sunday picnickers, in the forthright way his characters pursue their

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GOINGS ON ABOUT TOWN

comforts. "Boyfriends and Girlfriends" is fluff: it's artificial without being oppressive—a graceful, friendly abstraction. With Emmanuelle Chaulet, Sophie Renoir, François-Eric Gendron, and Eric Viellard. In French. —T.R. (7/25/88) (Lincoln Plaza.)

Bull Durham—Written and directed by Ron Shelton, this sunny romantic comedy has the kind of dizzying off-center literacy that Preston Sturges' pictures had. It's a satirical celebration of our native jauntiness and wit; it takes us into a subculture that's like a bawdy adjunct of childhood—minor-league baseball. Kevin Costner plays the smart, hyperarticulate catcher Crash, and comes through with his first wide-awake, star performance; at his best, he's as berserkly ironic as Jack Nicholson is at some of his peaks. After playing for twelve years, Crash arrives in Durham, North Carolina, to join the Durham Bulls and learns that he's been brought in to train baby-faced Nuke (Tim Robbins), a wild young rookie pitcher who is destined to move up. Susan Sarandon plays the beautiful, passionate Annie Savoy, a baseball fanatic who has her own scorecard: "There's never been a ballplayer slept with me who didn't have the best year of his career." What you keep reacting to is the film's exuberant doodles. (6/27/88) (Metro Cinema; through Aug. 25. . . . ¶ D. W. Griffith; through Aug. 25, evenings only. . . . ¶ Embassy 72nd St.; through Aug. 28.)

Die Hard—A formula action picture, but with the extra-potency formula. It has the sweatiest hero, the most sinister bad guys (with the thickest foreign accents), the silliest plot twists, the loudest explosions, the most gratuitous bursts of machine-gun fire—all in 70 mm. and bowel-rumbling Dolby sound. Bruce Willis plays John McClane, a New York cop battling a group of European terrorists who are holding his wife (Bonnie Bedelia) and her co-workers hostage on the thirtieth floor of a gleaming L.A. skyscraper (actually the Fox Plaza in Century City). The action is so grandiose and relentless that it's funny. The director, John McTiernan, has the right style for this sort of cheerfully stupid, super-kinetic comic-book violence. The problem with "Die Hard" isn't so much the physical overkill of the production as the emotional overkill of the script (by Jeb Stuart and Steven E. de Souza, from a novel by Roderick Thorp). By the end, there has been so much onscreen applause for McClane that the picture's "humanity" seems narcissistic and fake, like Oscar-night sentimentality. Also with Alan Rickman, who gives the character of the terrorists' leader a wonderful slimy elegance.—T.R. (8/8/88) (Movieland 8th Street Triplex, 86th Street East Twin, and Criterion Center. . . . ¶ Bay Cinema, Baronet, and Olympia; through Aug. 25.)

The Divorce of Lady X (1937)—Expensively produced attempt at a sophisticated romantic comedy; it's rather foolish and a little draggy, and is mainly of interest because of the cast—Laurence Olivier, Merle Oberon, Ralph Richardson, Binnie Barnes. They don't do much in the way of acting, but their arch romping is, at least, a curiosity. Tim Whelan directed. (Thalia SoHo; Aug. 31.)

The Eagle with Two Heads (1948)—The structure is similar to that of "Beauty and the Beast" but with inversions—this time it is the Queen (Edwige Feuillère) who is awakened from her trance by the revolutionary poet (Jean Marais), who has come to assassinate her. This is a sweepingly romantic picture—a beautiful trifle. Feuillère has a sense of gesture that almost any actress might envy, and Marais demonstrates once again that despite his almost comical square-headed handsomeness he can act. Jean Cocteau adapted his own play, and directed. It's the least known of the few films that he actually did direct; a dozen or so are falsely advertised as his. In French. (Cinema Village; Aug. 28.)

A Fish Called Wanda—This caper comedy promises to embody the best of two different styles of British humor: its director, the seventy-seven-year-old Charles Crichton, made "The Lavender Hill Mob," one of the greatest of the Ealing comedies, and its writer, executive producer, and star, the towering John Cleese, was a member of the

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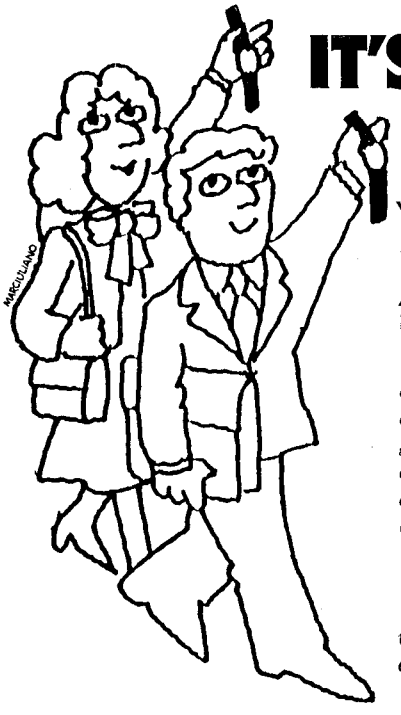

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IN BRIEF–Cont'd

Monty Python group and the creator of the hilarious television series "Fawlty Towers." Its main characters are a very proper London barrister (Cleese) and three jewel thieves: a crafty, sexy American woman named Wanda (Jamie Lee Curtis); another American, Otto (Kevin Kline), who's violently Anglophobic and dumb as dirt; and Ken (the ex-Pythonite Michael Palin), a deranged stutterer who's perfectly happy to bump off old ladies but becomes inconsolable at the death of a small dog or a tropical fish. The movie has a fair number of laughs, but Crichton's direction is too drab and poky for the material. Every time "Wanda" threatens to take off into the realm of insane, head-splitting farce, as "Fawlty Towers" so often did, something seems to drag it down—some impulse toward stability and restraint, at odds with the script's spirit of manic invention.—T.R. (7/25/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews Tower East, and Loews Paramount.)

A Handful of Dust—The filmmakers who have brought Evelyn Waugh's sharp, satiric 1934 novel to the screen treat it as if it were one of the writer's ponderous later works—as if it were "Brideshead Revisited." In fact, the producer, Derek Granger, and the director, Charles Sturridge, were also responsible for the plodding TV miniseries of "Brideshead" several years ago. Waugh's novel traces the decline of Tony Last, a naïve English landowner, husband, and father who is betrayed by everything and everyone he believes in—especially by his charming, shallow wife, Brenda. Although virtually all the dialogue is lifted directly from the novel, the polished cruelty rarely sounds witty. The filmmakers give the appearance of being perfectly faithful to the novel, but they're constantly betraying it. In the last half hour, though, we're treated to a brilliant performance by Alec Guinness, as the alarming Mr. Todd. Playing Tony's final betrayer, he hits the tiny notes of menace and ruthless self-interest in the lulling tones of polite English discourse: his šly, precise effects are an actor's equivalent of Waugh's sneakily devastating prose. With James Wilby (as Tony), Kristin Scott Thomas (as Brenda), Judi Dench, Rupert Graves, and Anjelica Huston. Screenplay by Granger, Sturridge, and Tim Sullivan.—T.R. (7/11/88) (Paris; through Aug. 23. . . . ¶ Festival; starting Aug. 24.)

Jezebel (1938)—A dazzling romantic melodrama. Bette Davis is impulsive, complex Julie, the Southern belle who destroys her chances for happiness by perversely flouting convention. William Wyler produced and directed this sumptuous moss-hung evocation of pre-Civil War New Orleans, with its great balls where tradition decreed that unmarried ladies dress in white—and where Julie's red dress wrecks her life. It's hard to know which is Davis's "big scene" in the movie—the painful, flamboyant error of her appearance in red or the breathtaking moment of her apology in white. With Henry Fonda, George Brent, Donald Crisp, Spring Byington, Eddie Anderson, and Fay Bainter. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug 26-27.)

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The Letter (1940)—Bette Davis's forty-third movie; it is one of her few good vehicles. The central figure of Somerset Maugham's melodrama is the wife of a rubber-plantation owner—a woman of such unimpeachable respectability that she can empty a gun into her lover and get away with it. Davis gives what is very likely the best study of female sexual hypocrisy in film history. Cold and proper, she yet manages to suggest the passion of a woman who'd kill a man for trying to leave her. She is helped by an excellent script (by Howard Koch) and by two unusually charged performances—James Stephenson as her lawyer and Herbert Marshall as her husband. The cast also includes Frieda Inescort, Gale Sondergaard, Bruce Lester, and Cecil Kellaway. The insistent music is pure, adulterated Max Steiner. It demeans William Wyler's clear, taut direction and the erotic awareness he brings to the material. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug. 26-27).

The Man Who Laughs (1928)—No one who saw this silent movie as a child is likely to have forgotten it. The Victor Hugo story is about fairly conventional seventeenth-century English court intrigues, except for one detail about the hero, Gwynplaine (Conrad Veidt). The heir to an earldom, he was kidnapped as a child and, at the orders of the king, a political enemy of his father, he was mutilated—his face carved into a perpetual grin. He had no choice but to become a clown. Produced by Universal on a lavish scale, the film is by no means a cheap horror story. The German-born director, Paul Leni, had a true gift for macabre décor, and the film's ambitious mixture of morbidity and historical melodrama is very effective, even with its heavy sentimentality. With the physically elegant Veidt as the hero, the picture has a romantic center that it would not have had with Lon Chaney. (John Barrymore played Gwynplaine on the stage.) Mary Philbin is beautiful, though sticky, as a blind girl who loves the clown; Olga Baclanova is a rowdy, loose duchess who is drawn to him. (Theatre 80 St. Marks; Aug. 30.)

Married to the Mob—Angela (Michelle Pfeiffer), the heroine of Jonathan Demme's crazy comedy, is married to an up-and-coming suburban gangster known as Frank the Cucumber (Alec Baldwin), and she doesn't feel good about her life; she's avid for ordinariness. When Frank is murdered by his boss, Tony the Tiger (Dean Stockwell), Angela gives away virtually the entire contents of her Long Island house and moves herself and her reluctant son into a cramped Lower East Side apartment, hoping that the mob will forget about her. Unfortunately, Tony the Tiger has the hots for her, the F.B.I. is tailing her, and Tony's insanely jealous wife, Connie (Mercedes Ruehl), is on the warpath. The script, by Barry Strugatz and Mark R. Burns, is fairly conventional, but it gives Demme the opportunity to juxtapose the crass opulence of suburban "family" life with the multi-ethnic funk of the Lower East Side, and to make grubby Rivington Street the locus of the movie's values. As usual, he's great at providing incidental pleasures, including a terrific score (with original music by David Byrne and a couple of dozen songs by a diverse bunch of performers) and a superbly eccentric cast. (Stockwell and Ruehl are particularly wonderful: they're a hilariously demented couple.) Pfeiffer's extraordinary performance is the movie's major pleasure; she makes both Angela's toughness and her goodness believable, funny, and touching. Also with Matthew Modine, Trey Wilson, Joan Cusack, Tracey Walter, and David Johansen (as a priest). The vibrant cinematography is by Tak Fujimoto.—T.R. (8/22/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, Loews 84th Street Sixplex, and Embassy.)

Midnight Run—At first, Martin Brest's new film is content to be a pleasantly flaky buddy movie and to lean on the talents of its two stars, Robert De Niro and Charles Grodin. De Niro's Jack Walsh, an ex-cop who works for a weaselly L.A. bail bondsman (Joe Pantoliano), goes to New York to retrieve a white-collar crook named Jonathan Mardukas (Grodin), an accountant who upon learning that the corporation he worked for was an organized-crime front embezzled fifteen million dollars and gave almost all of it to charity. They travel across the country in a succession of vehicles, dodging federal agents, hit men, and a profoundly stupid rival bounty hunter (John Ashton). De Niro gets marvellous effects by seeming to be constantly suppressing anger and powerful physical energy. Grodin, a minimalist and a miniaturist, does all his acting with sneaky looks and minute variations in the tone of his flat, dull voice, and he creates a memorable comic character—a placid solid-citizen type who's much wilier and crazier than he appears to be. The two actors look as if they were genuinely enjoying each other. But as they get close to L.A. Brest starts pumping up his sweetly funny road movie with large-scale action scenes—it's as if he were afraid that a pair of superlative actors doing low-key character comedy wouldn't be enough entertainment for us. Also with Yaphet Kotto, Dennis Farina, Richard Foronjy, and Robert Miranda. Screenplay by George Gallo.—T.R. (8/8/88) (Manhattan Twin, Art Greenwich Twin, 23rd St. West Triplex, Olympia, and National Twin.)

On the Beach (1959)—This cautionary tale, directed by Stanley Kramer, brings together a group of stars and puts them on the littoral of Australia, to await the lethal hydrogen-bomb cloud that has wiped out the rest of the world's population. Gregory Peck plays the commander of an American submarine with his customary relentless dignity, even when he's cuddling up with Ava Gardner, a lovable wildflower "who has lived too hard and drunk too much." Anthony Perkins, one of the submarine officers, wrestles, wet-eyed, with the problem of whether to give suicide pills to his wife (Donna Anderson) and child; Fred Astaire is a civilian scientist who explains the disaster by saying that somebody has pulled a boner. Somebody has; his initials are S.K. Adapted by John Paxton from the Nevil Shute novel. (Biograph Cinema; Aug. 30-31.)

Les Parents Terribles (1949; also known as "The Storm Within")—One of Jean Cocteau's two or three greatest films, and one of the finest examples of group acting ever photographed. He took his play about the disorderly, unpredictable parents (Marcel André and Yvonne de Bray) who cannot accept the fact that their son (Jean Marais) is growing up and re-created it for the screen with such skill that a true claustrophobic family atmosphere is achieved. In structure, this is a coincidence-ridden boulevard comedy, but Cocteau lifts it to the realm of tragicomic Oedipal fable. Gabrielle Dorziat plays the boy's aunt, and Josette Day his girl. De-

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signed by Christian Bérard; cinematography by Michel Kelber; music by Georges Auric. In French. (Cinema Village; Aug. 28.)

Popeye (1980)—Sometimes the components of a picture seem miraculously right and you go to it expecting a magical interaction. That's the case with "Popeye," with Robin Williams as the squinting sailor, and Shelley Duvall as the persnickety Olive Oyl, and Robert Altman directing, from a screenplay by Jules Feiffer. The picture doesn't come together, though, and much of it is cluttered, squawky, and eerily unfunny. But there are lovely moments—especially when Olive is loping along or singing, and when she and Popeye are gazing adoringly at the foundling Swee'Pea. The songs—an uneven collection—are by Harry Nilsson. (Thalia SoHo; Aug. 26-27.)

Stage Door (1937)—One of the flashiest, most entertaining comedies of the thirties, even with its tremolos and touches of heartbreak. As roommates in a New York boarding house for girls aspiring to a stage career, Katharine Hepburn and Ginger Rogers are terrific wisecracking partners. The other girls waiting for their lucky breaks include Eve Arden (who wears a cat around her neck like a tippet), Lucille Ball, Ann Miller, Andrea Leeds, and Gail Patrick. The cast includes the supremely regal (and supremely funny) Constance Collier, Adolphe Menjou, and Franklin Pangborn. Directed by Gregory La Cava. (Biograph Cinema; Aug. 25-27.)

Tucker: The Man and His Dream—There are marvellous moments throughout Francis Ford Coppola's biography of Preston Tucker (Jeff Bridges), a Midwestern inventor/entrepreneur who tried, and failed, to manufacture and market an innovative new automobile in the late forties. But both the people and the objects in this movie seem overbearingly *designed*, so that everything has a single, programmed significance. The style of "Tucker" is hyped-up forties Hollywood, and we believe, at first, that its intent is ironic, that Coppola is playing with America's optimistic, movie- and magazine-fuelled vision of itself in the postwar years. Bafflingly, this style doesn't change, or even modulate, when Tucker's bold enterprise starts to come apart, undermined by pressure from the government and the big three auto companies; the movie remains grandiose and artificial—all golden lighting and low, heroic angles. "Tucker" collapses in nostalgia, bad faith, and Capra-style populism. By the end, Coppola seems to have drifted into fantasyland right alongside his hero. Also with Joan Allen, Martin Landau, Frederic Forrest, Mako, Lloyd Bridges (uncredited), and Dean Stockwell, who does a lovely, mysterious cameo as Howard Hughes. Screenplay by Arnold Schulman and David Seidler; cinematography by Vittorio Storaro—T.R. (8/22/88) (Loews 34th Street Showplace, Loews New York Twin, and Loews 84th Street Sixplex.)

White Mischief—At first, Michael Radford's film about upper-class English settlers in Kenya in the nineteen-forties seems bracingly sardonic: there isn't a hint of the sneaky romanticism and nostalgia for Empire that colonial dramas so frequently succumb to. As one aristocratic viper after another is introduced, and each member of the large and familiar cast (Greta Scacchi, Charles Dance, Joss Ackland, Sarah Miles, John Hurt, Trevor Howard, Geraldine Chaplin) makes his distinctively peculiar entrance, the movie promises to be wicked fun. Amazingly, though, as the action gets nastier the picture gets duller. The screenplay, by Radford and Jonathan Gems, is based on the real-life murder of Josslyn Hay, Earl of Errol (Dance), a colonial Casanova who conducted a flagrant affair with young Lady Diana Broughton (Scacchi), to which their jaded social set reacted with a mixture of amusement and jealousy. As the movie concentrates more and more on the unsavory triangle of Errol, Diana, and her creepy middle-aged husband (Ackland), we begin to get the uneasy feeling that the director has lost track of his own intentions. For all the melodramatic complications, the characters remain static, as if they'd been frozen in place after their initial scenes.—T.R. (Cinema 3; through Aug. 25.)

Who Framed Roger Rabbit—This manic comedy, in which animated cartoon characters interact with live actors, is an amazing feat of entertainment engineering—like a Disneyland ride or a World's Fair movie. The setting is Los Angeles in 1947, and the screenplay, by Jeffrey Price and Peter Seaman, takes off from the fairly witty conceit that the cartoon characters, called Toons here, are ordinary contract players in the already skewed universe of the Hollywood studio system. These strange creatures become involved in a conventional forties mystery plot, featuring a seedy, hard-drinking private eye (Bob Hoskins). The director, Robert Zemeckis, and his small army of animators and special-effects artists mean to pay homage to the Hollywood animation of the thirties and forties, but the movie doesn't have the right spirit. Technology and plot mechanics labor mightily to evoke an aura of freedom and uninhibited joy—yet there's hardly a spontaneous moment in the film. Also with Christopher Lloyd, Joanna Cassidy, and Stubby Kaye. The funniest Toon, Roger's sireny wife, Jessica, speaks with Kathleen Turner's (uncredited) voice and sings with Amy Irving's. The director of animation was Richard Williams. Adapted, very loosely, from the novel "Who Censored Roger Rabbit?," by Gary K. Wolf.—T.R. (7/11/88) (Gramercy, Coronet, Columbia Cinema, and Embassy 1.)

Wings of Desire ("Der Himmel über Berlin")—The director, Wim Wenders, who wrote the script with the collaboration of Peter Handke, has a theme: in an approximation of Rilke's words, "Joy has gone astray." We're told that "when the child was a child" stories held together. Now all we have is fragmentation, entropy. Two angels—Damiel (Bruno Ganz) and Cassiel (Otto Sander)—hover over the bleak, divided city and move among the forlorn Berliners, listening to what's in their minds: listening to the questions about existence that these people ask themselves. Our overhearing what the angels hear—the thoughts chanted on the track, all in even, quiet tones, as grayed out as the sunless skies—works on us like a tranquillizer. Eventually, Damiel falls in love with a beautiful French aerialist (Solveig Dommartin), and gives up his wings. With Peter Falk, who brings some funky warmth to the role of an American movie star, and Curt Bois as a sad-faced old man called Homer. The cinematography (tinted black-and-white, and color) is by Henri Alekan. This Franco-German production is in English, French, and German. (5/30/88) (Cinema Studio.)

The World According to Garp (1982)—The movie version of John Irving's novel, directed by George Roy Hill, has no center; it's a simple series of vignettes, spanning Garp's life from his beginning to his end. If you listen to what Garp (Robin Williams) says, the movie is about love of family; if you look at what happens, though, it's a castration fantasy. Irving's novel is something special: he created a whole hideous and deformed women's political group (the Ellen Jamesians) in order to have his author-hero, his alter ego, destroyed by it. With John Lithgow, Glenn Close, Mary Beth Hurt, and Amanda Plummer. (Thalia SoHo; Aug. 26-27.)

A World Apart—Set in 1963, it's about a thirteen-year-old girl (Jodhi May) who lives a well-ordered, ruling-class life in a fine home in suburban Johannesburg until her father (Jeroen Krabbé), who's a Communist, flees the country in the middle of the night to escape arrest, and her mother (Barbara Hershey), the editor of a small anti-apartheid newspaper, is "detained" for ninety days, and then another ninety days. Based on a semi-autobiographical script by Shawn Slovo, the daughter of the journalist Ruth First and Joe Slovo, the leader of the banned South African Communist Party, the movie deals with the girl's feeling confused and resentful—the fight against apartheid is also her competitor. In prison or out, her mother is not all there for her. The theme of the movie is the conflict between fighting injustice and what we owe to our families—or, more poignantly, a young girl's pain at the loss of her mother and father, though she knows the reason for it. Shot in Zimbabwe, this remarkable first feature directed by the noted cinematographer Chris Menges has a visual snap to it. It's luminous yet very informal. And though, toward the end, it falls into chanting slogans, it has a radiant intelligence. The cast includes Linda Mvusi, who shared the best-actress award at Cannes with May and Hershey, and Tim Roth, Yvonne Bryceland, Albee Lesotho, David Suchet, and Nadine Chalmers. (6/13/88) (Quad Cinema. . . . ¶ Festival; through Aug. 23.)

School of American Ballet student performance: Merrill Ashley. Copyright:Martha Swope, 1967.

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THE NEW YORKER

THE TALK OF THE TOWN

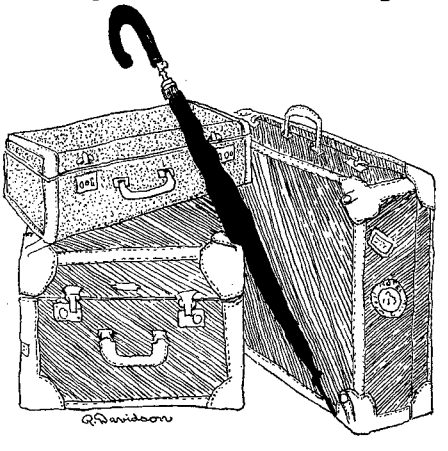
Notes and Comment

PROGRESS toward the kind of future depicted in the science-fiction movies of twenty and thirty years ago has been getting difficult to detect lately, and it has begun to dawn on us that the year 2000 may not deliver on all the promises that used to be made for it: world government, the colonization of outer space, backpack jet transport for the masses, robots for every imaginable form of menial labor, and the rest. Certain events of the summer of 1988, however, have been running eerily close to the plot of one science-fiction movie—a movie that came out in 1961. In "The Day the Earth Caught Fire," the world is visited within the space of a few weeks by floods, earthquakes, dense fog stretching from England to India (it's an English movie), and a record-setting heat wave. The experts at first refuse to acknowledge a common explanation for these quirks of nature, but then word gets out that, by chance, the Soviet Union and the United States chose the same moment for high-megaton nuclear tests, and the effect was to knock the earth out of its orbit and send it hurtling toward the sun. The human species is given a life expectancy of four months.

The current inventory of meteorological and environmental oddities includes the absence of fish from a quarter of the lakes in the Adirondacks; the decimation by air pollution and acid rain of the forests along the crest of the Appalachians; the presence of so much floating sewage (some of it medical) on the edge of the Eastern Seaboard that long stretches of public beach have had to be closed; a drought so far-ranging and sustained as to qualify forty per cent of the counties in the United States as disaster areas; and, worldwide, the hottest temperatures in the hundred and thirty years that anyone has been counting. (Four of the hottest years of the century have come in the nineteen-eighties.)

For a long time, there has been talk—mostly among academics, environmentalists, and other non-policymaking types—about the greenhouse effect: the warming of the earth as a result of gases pumped into the atmosphere. It is all but impossible, we gather, to show that the greenhouse effect "caused" this summer's weather. But the weather has obviously caused believers in the greenhouse effect to come out of the closet and declare themselves. Two months ago, when the dimensions of the drought were becoming apparent, Dr. James Hansen, the head of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Goddard Institute for Space Studies, in Manhattan, told a Senate committee that it was "time to stop waffling so much and say that the evidence is pretty strong that the greenhouse effect is here."

Dr. Hansen's testimony conferred respectability on some extremely thought-provoking long-term weather forecasts, among them an increase of anything from three to nine degrees Fahrenheit in the world's average temperature; a Midwest so hot and dry that the United States will have to import grain from the Soviet Union and Canada; a vast expanse of mud flats separating Chicago from Lake Michigan; a navigable Arctic Ocean; and semi-tropical conditions (suitable for growing oranges) near Puget Sound. The greenhouse effect, according to most predictions, will tend to lower the levels of lakes and rivers, through evaporation, but, because of the melting of polar ice, will lift the oceans. "By 2050, the oceans could be as much as four feet higher," a recent issue of *Newsweek* noted.



In "The Day the Earth Caught Fire," as soon as the problem has been correctly diagnosed the leaders of the world get together with their scientific advisers and formulate a rescue plan: a second round of nuclear explosions, designed to put the planet back on track. The response to this summer's developments has been more subdued. Apart from approving a few billion dollars in drought assistance for farmers, the leaders of the United States government have yet to take any action (unless, like their counterparts in the early scenes of the movie, they have been working on the matter in secret, so as not to incite the rest of us to panic). The President has not asked for television time to address the nation. Nor, for that matter, did either candidate for President mention the greenhouse effect in his acceptance speech.

We can only surmise that there are significant differences between the way officials and institutions respond to natural disasters in life and the way they do it in the movies. In life, they tend to look, at the start, for small, simple, affordable remedies; for in-

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stance, the Secretary of the Interior, Donald Hodel, has suggested that people wear hats to fend off the increase in ultraviolet radiation caused by the loss of ozone in the stratosphere. (That was last winter's big weather-related story.) The instinctive reaction of most movie heroes to a natural disaster is to ask themselves, "What can we do?" The instinctive reaction of many influential people in American life is to ask themselves, "Must we do anything?" After Dr. Hansen's testimony, Joseph Mullan, a spokesman on environmental issues for the National Coal Association, told a reporter for the *Times* that the greenhouse effect need not be a cause for concern if, as some scientists believe, the earth faces another ice age within the next thousand years or so; one calamity, he suggested, could cancel out the other.

The filmmakers who gave us the great science-fiction movies of the nineteen-fifties and sixties understood their own craft. They did not necessarily understand statecraft. What would a President actually do, we wonder, if a giant reptile bobbed up out of the ocean and began attacking the population centers? A President might not mobilize the Army right away. First of all, he would probably bring in a range of experts, and we don't mean just reptile people. There would be management analysts, pollsters, economists—the gamut. He might want to consult someone like Dr. Lester B. Lave, a cost-benefit-analysis man at Carnegie-Mellon University, who recently told the *Times* that since the costs of the greenhouse effect are impossible to assess "there is no way to justify spending tens of billions of dollars a year" to prevent it. Similarly, it would not be an easy thing to estimate the total damage that a Godzilla, say, could do if left alone for an indefinite period. (A reptile may slow down as it gets older. That would have to be factored in.) The government might end up deciding to live with the creature rather than rush into a program of eradication. How would such a program be funded, anyway? You never hear anybody mention the "T" word in a disaster movie.

Journalists, like government officials, have more interests to balance than some moviemakers realize. In "The Day the Earth Caught Fire," the earth's upcoming collision with the sun is a story that the newspapers go after in a big way. The two reporters through whose eyes the events are seen have no trouble getting front-page space or banner headlines for what is, ultimately, a weather story. Dr. Hansen's testimony, by contrast—although it did make the front page of the *Times*—was not the lead story of the day, and the headline ("GLOBAL WARMING HAS BEGUN, EXPERT TELLS SENATE") appeared in type about half as big as that used three weeks later for the selection of Lloyd Bentsen as Michael Dukakis's running mate. And the Presidential candidates and their running mates have remained on the front page, while the greenhouse effect has moved deep inside.

Most journalists see the news as a spectrum—with war, politics, and everything else important at one end, and the weather at the other end. In this, the press's attitude may reflect the public's. People talk about the weather a lot, but—farmers and fishermen aside—they tend to do so when they can think of nothing better to talk about. Weather talk is the classic example of small talk. A few years from now, we may look back on the summer of 1988 as the moment when it started becoming big talk.

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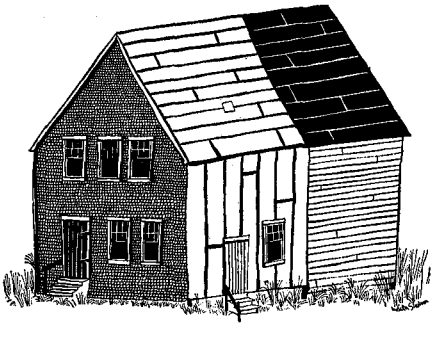
Devotion

A FRIEND from San Francisco writes:

In 1539, when the Ottoman armies of Süleyman the Magnificent had conquered much of Hungary and seemed bent on encircling the Mediterranean, Pope Paul III issued the first known papal order recognizing the virtue of forty hours of unwearied prayer. "Our beloved son the Vicar General of the Archbishop of Milan at the prayer of the inhabitants of the said city," said the papal brief, "in order to appease the anger of God provoked by the offenses of Christians and in order to bring to nought the efforts and machinations of the Turks who are pressing forward to the destruction of Christendom, amongst other pious practices, has established a round of prayers and supplications to be offered, both by day and night, by all the faithful of Christ, before our Lord's Most Sacred Body in all the churches." By 1731, the practice of Forty Hours' Devotion in times of public peril was so widespread that Pope Clement XII issued precise instructions for it, specifying even that at least twenty candles were to burn while relays of people prayed before consecrated Communion bread.



Like other popular devotions, the Forty Hours fell out of use in the nineteen-sixties, after the second Vatican Council; it was revived four years ago by parishioners of the church of the Most Holy Redeemer in the Castro district here who are praying for an end to the AIDS epidemic. The church, a pink neoclassical building two blocks from the neighborhood's busiest intersection, has roughly a hundred and twenty longtime members—widows and retired people who have been coming to it for decades—and almost six hundred new ones, who joined after its pastor, Tony McGuire, formed a Gay and Lesbian Outreach Committee six years ago. In those six years, funerals and memorial services have quadrupled—there are at least ten a month now, mostly for young people—and last year the empty parish convent across the street was converted into a hospice, which is partly subsidized by a weekly bingo game in the church basement.

When I visited the church one recent Thursday, the day before the start of its fourth annual weekend of continuous prayer, a knot of men and women carrying candles, crucifixes, and small brass bowls were forming themselves into a rough processional crocodile on the church steps. "Get that oil up there, girl!" I heard a youngish man with a candle say, in a friendly way, to a tiny elderly woman wearing turquoise pants. She punched him in the arm and then obediently raised her bowl to chin level, and the procession marched into the church. I later learned that this was a rehearsal for a sacrament of anointing the sick.

At the front altar, a woman with a spiky haircut was tacking up a banner.

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"The theme for this year's Forty Hours is 'Refresh Your People,' " she told me. "We've had four or five years of dealing with AIDS, and we're getting tired, so I'm trying to get across a theme of refreshment, using images of water and wheat—food for the journey across the desert. We're doing the back of the altar in teal, and I've made these teal banners, with wonderful symbolic thingies pasted on with Spra-ment." She stepped back from the banner, and a man carrying a candle studied it carefully. "Oh, it's like wheat," he said, after a pause. "It's fabulous. Absolutely fabulous."

The man carrying the candle, who introduced himself as Thomas Michael, not giving his last name, said, "I'm in charge of ushers for the weekend, and my lover, John, is putting out coffee and cookies to keep people going all night." He was wearing a boldly striped shirt and low-slung black Levi's, and he had a handlebar mustache like an Irish fireman's. "I joined the church four years ago, at the invitation of a friend who's dead now," he went on. "I hadn't been in church for twenty years—since my early twenties, when I confessed that I was living with a man, and a priest threatened me with blanket excommunication. So I withdrew, and I was *gaaay*. Now I'm back. Both John and I will be taking a shift to pray in the church at night this weekend, and on Saturday we'll be anointed. Six months ago, John got shingles. I started drinking heavily, because I didn't want to know, and then one morning I woke up with a hangover and said, 'Let's quit running away and have the test and fight the S.O.B. down to hell.' I don't care what anyone says, nothing prepares you for the moment when the doctor tells you, 'I'm sorry. You're HIV-positive.' I know that unless something comes up we're going to die—if not from AIDS, from some complication."

As we watched a man in a small cherry picker, trailing a banner of teal, rise hydraulically to the ceiling, Thomas Michael added, "This is the place where I've let a lot of people go."

I asked him how many of his friends had died, and he said, "They go in groups, like the rings of a redwood tree. The inner ring, of my closest friends and the people I've had sexual relations with—fifty. Then people I've invited to parties and seen at barbecues—a hundred and fifty. The outer ring, of people I've known from the bar scene and the bathhouses, people I've met on the AIDS ward at the county hospital, where my hair salon serves dinner every other week—maybe three hundred. The church offers me a formidable structure to seep into. Marie Krystofiak"—he nodded toward the tiny woman holding the oil, who was now at the front altar—"helped me make three hundred Christmas baskets last year for people with AIDS. And if you're in really deep grief there's always someone like Marie, who will come and sit next to you. Marie's not my mother—my mother is dead—but she's like my second mother."

When I joined the crowd on the steps of the church Friday evening for the memorial service opening the Devotion, Thomas Michael, wearing a badge that read "Forty Hours Committee—Usher," was handing out white helium balloons. "I'm hyperventilating already," he said as he gave me mine. The crowd spilled off the sidewalk into the street; it was windy, and our balloons, each symbolizing someone who died last year, kept bumping against one another. At seven-twenty-three, recorded church bells tolled, and the young woman with the spiky haircut began reading a list of a hundred and seventy friends of the parish who died last year. Father McGuire shook holy water over the balloons—it landed with a single *thwack*—and, on a signal, we all released them. Then we went in out of the wind for a memorial Mass.

"I am burned out. I've been here since 5 A.M.," Thomas Michael whispered when I returned on Saturday morning, fourteen hours into the vigil. Only a few people—mostly young men and elderly ladies—had stationed themselves in the pews. Votive candles, sputtering and clicking like tiny castanets, were going out one by one. A man in a jacket reading "Harley-Davidson—Born in the USA" stopped in briefly, setting a boombox down in the aisle while he genuflected. Not long before noon—sixteen hours into the Devotion—the church filled, the organ sounded, the choir began to sing, and Thomas Michael and John, a serious-looking man with aviator glasses, entered, carrying candles, at the head of the procession. One man held aloft a Bible covered in teal cloth. A saturnine priest with deep-set dark eyes—Father Richard Sotelo—asked "those who are seriously ill" to come forward for anointing, and Thomas Michael and John joined a cluster of people moving up the aisle. The anointing was a group effort: as Father Sotelo anointed each forehead, a score of hands shot inward like the tentacles of a large sea anemone, stroking the supplicant's back. When Father Sotelo smoothed a cross of oil on Thomas Michael's forehead and said, "With this holy anointing may the Lord help you, Tommy, with the grace of His holy spirit," I reached out my hand, too.

The devotion ended officially at eleven-thirty on Sunday morning, with a grand, crowded Mass led by Archbishop John R. Quinn of San Francis-

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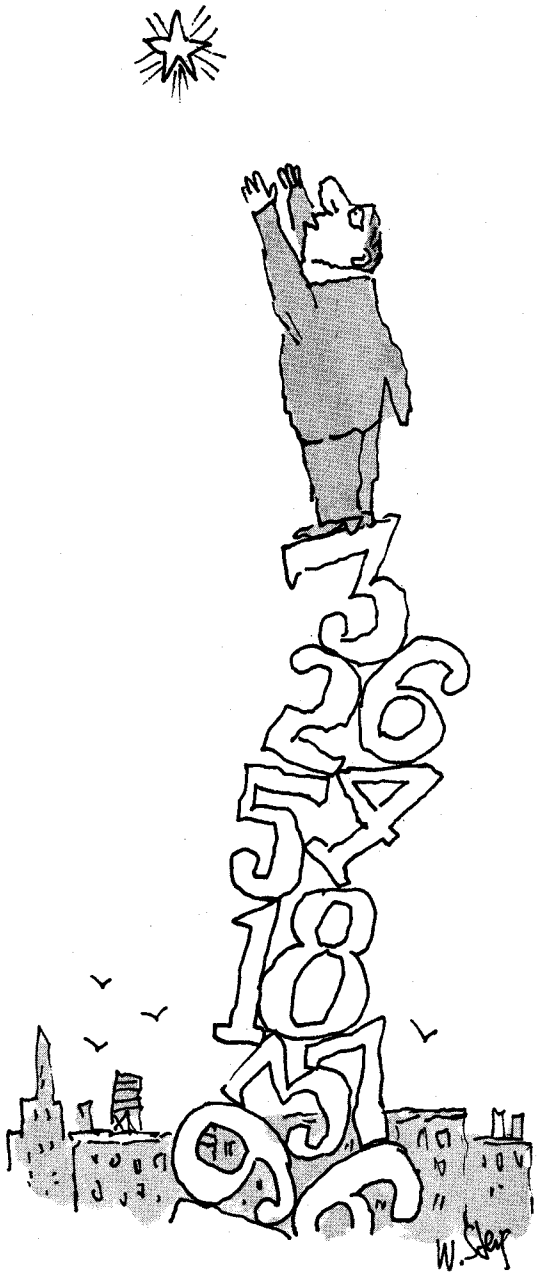
co, but it didn't really stop until after brunch in the bingo hall. Marie Krystofiak, wearing a blue dress with white cuffs, sat on a folding chair near Thomas Michael and lit a cigarette. "When this is over, I'm going to visit my grandchildren in Nevada," she said. "I'm just beat. I went home last night, took a bath, and fell asleep in the middle of the Act of Contrition. It's catching up with me. More than fifty boys I knew died last year, and a lot more are going. It's not that I'm depressed, but it gets to your heart. You can't stop thinking about the ones who are gone. You think, Where will this end? Every day, I go to the statue of the Blessed Mother and I say, 'Please, Mary, talk to your Son!' "

Thomas Michael got up to give her a ride home. "A rock formed this weekend, something to stand on, a sense that there are people who care for me, so I can keep going," he said. "It's not like going bare-chested into the Crusades. It's more like: Get it together, Myrtle, take that shower, put one foot in front of the other, and walk out the door."

Tortoises

IN Flushing—way out in Flushing, past the globe of the 1964 World's Fair, past the last stop of the No. 7 train—on 162nd Street a block from Northern Boulevard, there is a pet store called New York Reptilia. It has snakes thicker than vacuum-cleaner hoses and mottled in pale pink and pale yellow. It has snakes of poison green wrapped around artificial branches. It has monitor lizards the color of dust and the size of small dogs. It has tree frogs (it also carries amphibia) sticking to the glass walls of their cages like magnets on a refrigerator. It has a list of prices for live food, ranging from seventy-five cents for baby mice to four dollars for jumbo rats. And when we were there one day recently it had—we're not kidding—a two-headed snake, which we hope never to see again, this side of a nightmare. Anyway, we had gone out to Flushing to consider Reptilia's tortoises.

Our interest in tortoises had come over us gradually. On Lexington Avenue, across from the Barbizon Hotel, there is a pet store called American Aquarium, which we pass twice a week. It put a tortoise pen in its window this summer, and, one blazing day, we stopped to take a good look. A pair of French girls were oo-la-la-ing over some cockatoos, but we ignored them. The pen had a gravel surface, with a pile of stones along one side and a freestanding piece of wood, like a menhir, in the front. Three tortoises sat in a pan of water in the back, as still as rocks; a fourth rested in the shade of the credit-card window stickers. The only sign of life came from a fifth tortoise, lying with his head poked into the right front corner of the pen: he blinked once. The French girls went away. We squatted down to tortoise level. All of a sudden, the live wire began to move. He swung his shell (it was in delicate shades of yellow and brown) around and headed for the center of the pen, and a little pile of food: old bananas, tomatoes, strawberries. With his beak he picked up half a berry by its tuft of green leaves. Then he dropped it and, holding it in place with a horny foot, started to bite it. This roused the tortoise in the sticker shadows. The two tortoises stuck their necks out and looked at each other.



Lottery

Maybe we are easily entertained. We made a circuit of Manhattan pet stores, examining their tortoises, and came, finally, to Flushing. Reptilia had three glass tanks of the creatures. A smallish tank held smallish tortoises, about the size of the animals we had first studied—no longer than a span. Two larger tanks contained more substantial beasts, each about a foot long, half a foot wide, and half a foot tall. They lay on beds of pine shavings, with fronds of long grass and some red cabbage at hand in case they got hungry.

One of Reptilia's owners, a bearded young man, introduced us to his stock. "I wish I had a better selection now," he said. "The nicest thing I had recently was an Indian starred tortoise. I sold him in a day for five hundred dollars." He took one of the small animals out of its tank. Its upper shell, or carapace, was as flat as its lower shell, or plastron. Both shells were very flexible, like a Top-Sider. This was a pancake tortoise, and in June it had laid an egg, which was incubating in a plastic deli container. The egg was gray, an inch and a half long, and veined like marble. The big animals were red-footed tortoises, leopard tortoises, and elongated tortoises, two of each. These all had hard, rounded carapaces. The elongateds were the color of blond wood; the leopards wore yellow speckles on a field of sable; the red-foots were blackish with scarlet scales on their legs and head.

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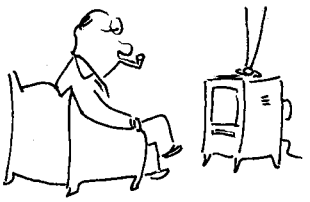
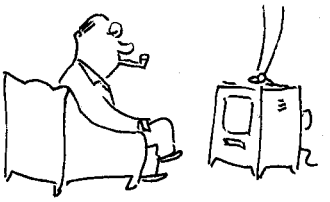
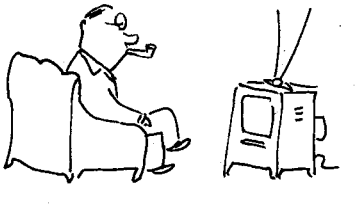


LIFE BEFORE THE TELEVISION WRITERS' STRIKE



LIFE DURING THE TELEVISION WRITERS' STRIKE



LIFE AFTER THE TELEVISION WRITERS' STRIKE

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"I push a lot of animals as pairs," the owner said. "They're happier that way, and you might as well see if you can get some money out of them by breeding." They were not dainty eaters, he informed us. "I raid the dumpsters of the grocery store across the street and come back with two big bags of fruit and vegetables. That lasts about two days." After years of good eating, a leopard tortoise might weigh as much as a hundred pounds. The owner guessed that the tortoises he had were all teen-agers. Thinking of cat-years and dog-years, we asked what that was the equivalent of, and he said, "These are animals that can live a century. We're talking human years."

We asked him how intelligent they were.

His face took on the expression of a man who would not speak ill of his beloved, and he said, "Tortoises won't walk off a ledge. Turtles will, though that may be because they live in water and don't expect to fall on anything." (We had also asked other tortoise-lovers this question, and had found that it was controversial. "On a scale from one to ten, they're at two or three," a pet-store owner in Yorkville told us. "They're quite intelligent," a herpetologist at the American Museum of Natural History said. "In maze tests, they run equal to white rats, and that's pretty good for a reptile." A member of the New York Turtle and Tortoise Society told us, "My five tortoises all have particular places in the yard they return to year after year, which indicates they have a memory, or something like that." And the girl behind the counter at American Aquarium said, "I never knew they had intelligence myself. I thought they just bumbled along. Ate and slept. Hung out.")

The Reptilia owner excused himself to unpack a box of iguanas that had just come in, but he encouraged us to pick the big tortoises up. "Play with them," he said. We took out one of each kind, one at a time. They weighed as much as a good-sized dictionary. Somewhat to our surprise, none of them pulled in their heads. Their shells did not seem like parts of a living creature: the plastrons had the feel of a parquet floor; the carapaces were ribbed, like some sort of folk-art object. Only when we let a tortoise's feet press against our hands could we feel its force. The tortoises all had long, wizened necks, and they had two tiny nostrils on the ends of their beaks. When they yawned, their mouths were pink.

After we put them back, there was a burst of activity. They trudged through the shavings, banging against the walls and each other with hard knocks that made a noise deeper than the click of billiard balls. They would never move any faster. With luck, they would be alive in 2068.

Floating Cinema

NOT long ago, we received a newsletter called *The Daily Plant* from the city's Department of Parks and Recreation, which read:

COMING TO A SHORELINE NEAR YOU—THE FLOATING CINEMA. Some might think "Airport" a bad choice as an in-flight movie, but Parks feels "Jaws" is the perfect flick to see while picnicking at Coney Island near the Atlantic Ocean. . . . Spectators . . . are advised to bring blankets, beach chairs and a flashlight.

We do not own a beach chair or a flashlight, but we decided that this was a show not to be missed, so the other evening we took the B train to Stillwell Avenue, Brooklyn, waded through the sweating crowd around the Big Wheel, and walked along Riegelmann Boardwalk to Pier 16. The beach was nearly empty, except for a few trash cans cocked at odd angles in the sand. Behind us, the abandoned Steeplechase parachute jump was silhouetted against the spinning glitter of Coney Island. In front of us, the crashing Atlantic receded into the horizonless dark. We couldn't see the shark fins, but we could sense them.

What we *could* see was the Floating Cinema, a barge with a movie screen and a projection house on it, moored about eighty feet offshore. The barge was designed and built by Jon Rubin, an experimental filmmaker based in New York, and Mr. Rubin politely interrupted our contemplation of the waves. Mr. Rubin is medium height, oval-shaped, and getting bald. He was wearing a short-sleeved shirt, shorts, blue-framed glasses, and pink socks, and was carrying a walkie-talkie. While he fiddled with its knobs, he told us that he was the son of an engineer—a basement inventor, in fact—and grew up in Newton, a suburb of Boston; that he studied art history at Yale, and founded the Bard College Film Department in 1971; and that he now headed the film program at SUNY Purchase. He told us that since 1981 the Floating Cinema had appeared on the Erie Canal and on the Mississippi, Potomac, Ohio, and Allegheny Rivers. It was making its New York début this summer, showing nine feature-length films ("Beach Blanket Bingo" and "West Side Story" among them), free, at six waterfronts around the city. "I think of it as kind of sight sculpture," Mr. Rubin said. "I don't know that any sculptor would want to own up to it—it's kind of awkward—but it *is* a made object that both

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"You're wise, but you lack tree smarts."

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changes and reflects the environment."

At about eight-twenty, Mr. Rubin called up the crew of the Floating Cinema—Captain Bill Heintz and Projectionist Jim Coleman—on the walkie-talkie. Soon the unmistakable twang of the Beach Boys drifted out of the darkness. A crowd began to form in front of the barge. "I've always found the waterfront a magic place, because it's a double-sided environment," Mr. Rubin said. "It's both very seductive and very threatening. Especially at night. I mean, it's kind of like sex and death in one. It's everything. I like the idea of putting images in that very loaded environment."

The opener, a Merry Melodies cartoon called "Fresh Fish" and starring the likes of Professor Mackerel Fishface, appeared on the bobbing screen, and more people came down from the boardwalk onto the sand. "This is a pretty good crowd," Mr. Rubin observed. "I talked to some lifeguards today, and they said that because of the beach waste they've had only a tenth of their normal crowd this summer."

The first version of the Floating Cinema appeared at a summer film workshop at Hampshire College in 1981, when Mr. Rubin used two rowboats held together by two-by-fours, and a borrowed projector and screen, to show students' films on a small pond. It was a success. Subsequent versions were based on small "party barge" pontoon boats. "We set off to do surprise shows every night at little parks or towns we'd stumble onto on the Allegheny River," Mr. Rubin said. "I don't know why we ended up there, exactly, except that's where we went. We'd never announce our coming, and as soon as it got dark we'd start our show. People would pop out of their tents and go, 'What the hell is this?' It was a little bit like UFOs landing." Mr. Rubin progressed to a larger barge two years ago, for a show in New Orleans.

"What about this year's version?" we asked.

The 1988 Floating Cinema, we were told, features an eighteen-by-twenty-four-foot vinyl movie screen. The film is projected from behind the screen by an Eiki pedestal-type projector. The "barge" is actually two eight-by-twenty-eight-foot fibreglass pontoon boats held twenty feet apart by four aluminum beams to create a platform approximately forty feet long and twenty-eight feet wide. The vessel is powered by two forty-horsepower Tohatsu outboards, and steering is accomplished by thrusting one or the other—"like driving a tank," Mr. Rubin said. Once a show is finished, the Floating Cinema can be deconstructed and transported overland by trailer to its next venue.

Now Mr. Rubin got on the walkie-talkie again; he was worried about how the surf, which was becoming more energetic with the evening breeze, would affect his cinema. "It's kind of risky, because so many things can go wrong," he said ruefully. "I mean, the whole thing could sink or float away. But I like that."

Perhaps a hundred and fifty people had gathered by the water's edge as the first strains of shark music crept through the night: "Duuum-dum; duuum-dum; dum-dum, dum-dum, dum-dum, dum-dum." A group of girls lying on their stomachs squealed and hid their faces; six little boys who had crowded onto a lifeguard chair began punching each other excitedly; a man sitting on a plastic bag dug his toes deep into the sand. Our heart rate, in a Pavlovian response to the music, quickened before there was any sign of a shark. In fact, the screen was showing a nice beach party with a bonfire—much like a little fire down the beach to our left, we noticed.

"They caught *a* shark, not *the* shark, not the shark that killed Crissy Watkins," said Richard Dreyfuss, as the earnest oceanographer in the movie.

Mr. Rubin got on the walkie-talkie. "Shore to cinema craft. Bill, I'm thinking you could swim around in the water with a big fin on, over."

A garbled reply came back.

"O.K., we'll save it for next year, over." Mr. Rubin grinned mischievously.

"Wait a minute, there's something else out there," Dreyfuss muttered as he peered at his boat's electronic equipment.

The six boys had dismounted from their perch and were sitting quietly in the sand.

"What we are dealing with here is a perfect engine, an eating machine. . . . All this machine does is swim and eat and make little sharks," Dreyfuss said.

At the end of the movie, when Roy Scheider, as chief of police, shoots the compressed-air cylinder lodged in the shark's mouth, exploding it, the audience laughed and clapped and whistled. Then the crowd stood up and shook the sand from its belongings and headed back toward the noise and lights of the arcades.

The song "Choo Choo Ch' Boogie" cranked out from the Floating Cinema.

No one went near the water.

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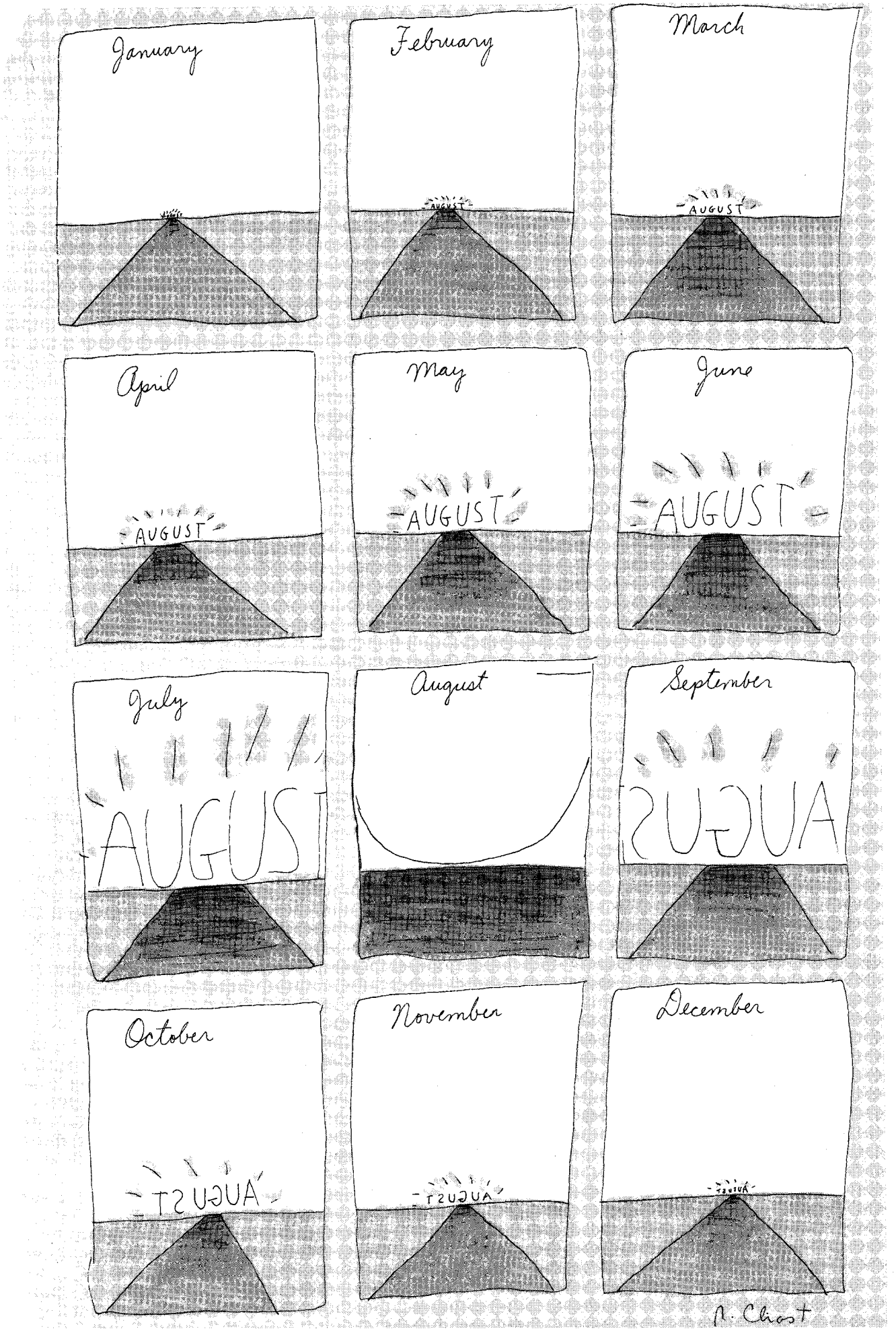

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I READ MY NEPHEW STORIES

OK., what am I doing on a beach in Massachusetts? Simple: my brother Ken ran away from home when he was fifteen.

I not only have a brother who ran away from home but an aunt who committed suicide, a great-uncle who went to prison, and a cousin who dropped out and went to India. I'm still trying to get the rights to our saga back from the O'Neill estate.

Anyway, Ken not only ran away from home but never came back, which bewildered my younger brothers and me but which my other older brother Jim called A Very Outstanding Event. Jim and Ken stayed in contact, and I would receive periodic laconic reports. Now Ken was doing bits at Cinecittà, now he was a reporter for the International *Herald Tribune* in Paris. Presenting the news was Ken's forte, it seemed, for he stayed with it. He even came home to do it on American television.

This, to me, seemed unnaturally forgiving, as if James Joyce had gone home to Dublin to lick his lips at the sight of the Martello Tower and cry out, "Champion!" Jim and I met Ken for lunch one day in New York; Ken was up for a transfer from New Orleans to New York. So many distances, voyages, in some people's lives. You notice this particularly if, like me, you stay in one place for entire epochs, enthusiastically resisting all opportunities to travel, even to Brooklyn for dinner.

Ken didn't land the New York job. He ended up in Boston, which he said he preferred. To what, I wonder. New York? Paris? His past? He was married and had a little boy, and that got me amazed. Here was a man, flesh of my flesh, only three years older than I, who had already set upon his course of leaving his mark upon the world—and I was still worrying over whether I would ever come upon a copy of the Capitol "Pal Joey" with the original cover. We were brothers, but we weren't entirely related, if you see what I mean.

It turned out that even a Boston television anchorman has to come to New York periodically for meetings, and lunch with Ken and Jim became a regular feature of my life. At one of these dates, looking toward the summer, Ken invited us up to stay with him on Martha's Vineyard. Jim said no, but I was curious. I wanted to see what else I wasn't entirely unrelated to, Ken's wife and son. I had a good time and went again the next year, and it became an annual visit—more than a visit: dues. After three or four of these trips, I felt certain that if I tried to stick out a summer without visiting the Kens they would hale me into court. I had become a participant in their season, a member of my own family.

A certain weekend would be assigned me, set aside, built around the things I was likely to do and say. Ken was a man of Significant Draw, so the trip's logistics had Major Appeal. Zesty, highly inflected metropolitan types, doing this important favor for a friend of a friend of a friend, would pick me up in front of my building, the car packed with cold collation, ambition, and wit. Crowded cars, rigid stages. This is travelling. I hate it but—sometimes—I do it. There was usually one guy too many (besides me), and someone would get stuck with a liverwurst sandwich, and one of the women would want to stop when no one else did, and one of the men would drop a truly ghastly ethnic slur of some kind. (No one would say anything, but the silence was a hiss.) Then, too, the car trip from Manhattan to outer New England must vie with the Damascus-Peking caravan line for density of tedium. Still, eventually I would land at the ferry slip, thinking of some story I might get out of the car people. Soon enough I would be standing on the boat, and I would see my brother and sister-in-law standing with my nephew. I would wave. My brother, whom I understood very well in our youth but now think of as This Guy I Know, or even (Hey) Mister, waves back. He is jaunty, confident, always taller than I remember. He's going to age poisonously well. He's even getting just a bit gray; good career move. My sister-in-law points me out to the little boy, and he'll gaze at me with wonder and

"Seems to start earlier every year."

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suspicion and bashful delight.

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SO that's what I'm doing on a beach in Massachusetts: sitting in their kitchen at the "breakfast bar," finishing my morning coffee.

Curtain up, and my sister-in-law says, "I wish you and your brother got along better."

"We get along quite well for two people so near yet so far, don't you think?"

"I mean, I wish you acted as if you liked each other. I know you do like each other, of course." She rinses out the name mugs: Ken, Ellen, Toby. "It's just so nice to see him . . . relating?" A paper towel to dry the mugs. My sister-in-law is very neat; her theory of eating implements is, they're either in use or in the cupboards. None of that wet stuff hanging in the porte cochère, or whatever they call those plastic racks next to the sink. You wash it, you dry it. You're brothers, you relate.

"Ken really isn't a big relater," I say. "I expect the television camera has spoiled him. He's gotten so used to addressing a population he probably doesn't know how to talk to one person anymore."

My brother, I gather, is a very hot item among analysts of the 18-to-49 female demographics, but we never mention this to him, because he has fierce aplomb, always did. No wonder he left home without explaining why. Frankly, I don't think he ever did know how to talk to one person; anchormanning is perfect casting for him.

Still, he has what appears to be a highly socialized marriage: his wife likes everything about him, and his son is so young that his occasional testy rebellions pass for standard-make puerile mischief. I think there may be a problem on the brew there, but my sister-in-law sees the three of them as a gang of fun-loving pals. She is very proud of Ken's fame, too. She sends me his clippings. She used to accompany these with warm little notes, trying to explain why she is doing it. Then I told her that in publishing, where time is the first concern, we just write "F.Y.I." on something and send it off. Amused, she has made it a household joke: she will hand me a bowl of rice pudding, indicate the whipped cream with a spy's nod, and murmur, "F.Y.I., friend?"

Anyway, I already know why she is doing this: loyalty and love. She's terrific, but she feels too hard. "You know," she begins, "last night . . ." She looks away, looks back at me.

"O.K., yes," I say, "but please don't cry."

I always know when she will. It's not really crying; she leaks for joy. It's like those sudden, momentary thundershowers in London, when you look up and see the sun right through the rain. It'll be over shortly. But you still get wet.

"It was just so nice to be all together," she says. "And Toby loves it when you read to him. He won't let anyone else, you know. We have so much trouble getting him to bed in the city. It's different when you're here."

"It's always different where I am. It's in my contract."

"Now, don't make a joke of it. It was so sweet. And I know you know that, so don't look away, either. You and Toby look so cute together, too. And you read so well." She is leaking.

"Toby and I aren't that great a team," I put in. "He's very tough for six. I only read to him so he won't grouch at me."

"Oh, that's not true." She gazes happily around the tidy summer kitchen: the mounted utensils, the standing machines, Toby's watercolors on the wall, Smurf stickers on the fridge, all their little heads carefully cut off. "Grouch at you? It's family! We've got to be our own best friends!"

"I wish you wouldn't enthuse just after breakfast."

"When he has a nightmare . . . Of

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course, he doesn't often. But when he does, do you know he speaks your name? As if he's worried about you? I've heard him."

"Toby speaks my name?"

"Not Toby. Your brother."

Alarmed, I head for the beach. There's not much else to do out here but eat, sleep, and bake on the sand. You'd think an anchorman would be at a loss here: nothing but individuals to swank around for, at, with. What a waste of an act.

And God knows Ken's got one. The first time we were alone together as adults—at lunch at my neighborhood joint, the Mayfair, at Fifty-third and First—he broke a copious silence by telling me a sure way to fascinate a woman: immediately after, read her a story. He recommended "The Velveteen Rabbit." He said the combination of the sweetness of the fairy tale and the tenderness of lovemaking overwhelms them. Wrong. It isn't the combination—it's the paradox of the aggressiveness of cock and the sudden sweetness of the storybook working for and against each other.

But he's definitely on to something here. Sometimes I try to visualize Ellen lying next to him, listening to him read "The Velveteen Rabbit." I can see it. I can see it more easily than I can see myself on this patch of beach among—forgive me, Ellen—strangers. Still, I'm a game guest. I bring a litre of Johnnie Walker Red. I make my own bed, first thing up, even before the toothpaste. I spell them in looking after Toby. I take us all out to dinner on my last night. And I read my nephew stories.

It started by chance. One evening after dinner three or four years ago, I happened to pick up an ancient Oz book lying next to me on the couch. As I leafed through it, Toby came up and said, "Mine."

His father looked over from six newspapers, including the Manchester *Guardian*. "No, Toby, that's mine," he said. But my name was written on the front free endpaper.

"Read," Toby urged me.

I demurred with some evasion, and he hit me.

"Better read to him," my newscaster brother said, not unamused.

I did read to him, and he listened carefully. All three of them do; and they watch me as they listen. It's like reading one's work in a bookstore. They even unplug the phone. After a while, Toby puts his head in my lap, and after a longer while he falls asleep. Then I carry him upstairs, and his parents follow, his mother to dote and his father to stand in the doorway, framed in the light from the hall as if he had moved from the news to a suspense series. It's film noir; it's coming too close. Sometimes Toby murmurs reproachful excerpts as I put him to bed—"Why didn't you tell me the secret?" or "You are not playing fairly." Surely these are not meant for me, precisely. Not precisely. By then, my brother has moved into the room to put his arms around my sister-in-law from behind. These soft noises there, as I tuck Toby in. He likes to be tightly wrapped, like a present. Then I turn to face them, hugged together as they are, and for a moment I fear they won't let me out of the room.

THE beach is always quiet here, nearly deserted well up into a Saturday noontime. I open my spiral notebook and pursue the tale of the moment—about, as usual, things I have seen, done, said. I have got to try writing *fiction:* about the encounter of Nabokov and Tolstoy in Heaven, perhaps "The Goblin Who Missed Thanksgiving." I do not want to write anymore about people I know, people with feelings that I have been tricked into sharing. I should write books like those I read to Toby, set in fabulous places among bizarre creatures. You can say anything you want to in such tales and no reader will wonder who you are. You could be the Velveteen Rabbit.

My sister-in-law comes along after a bit with Toby and several tons of beach equipment. There are flagstaffs to stick in the sand and pails of two sorts, the metal kind decorated with merry scenes and the plastic kind with a side pocket for the toting of a shovel. There are rubber balls, a dead

"Detective Grayson. Sleaze."

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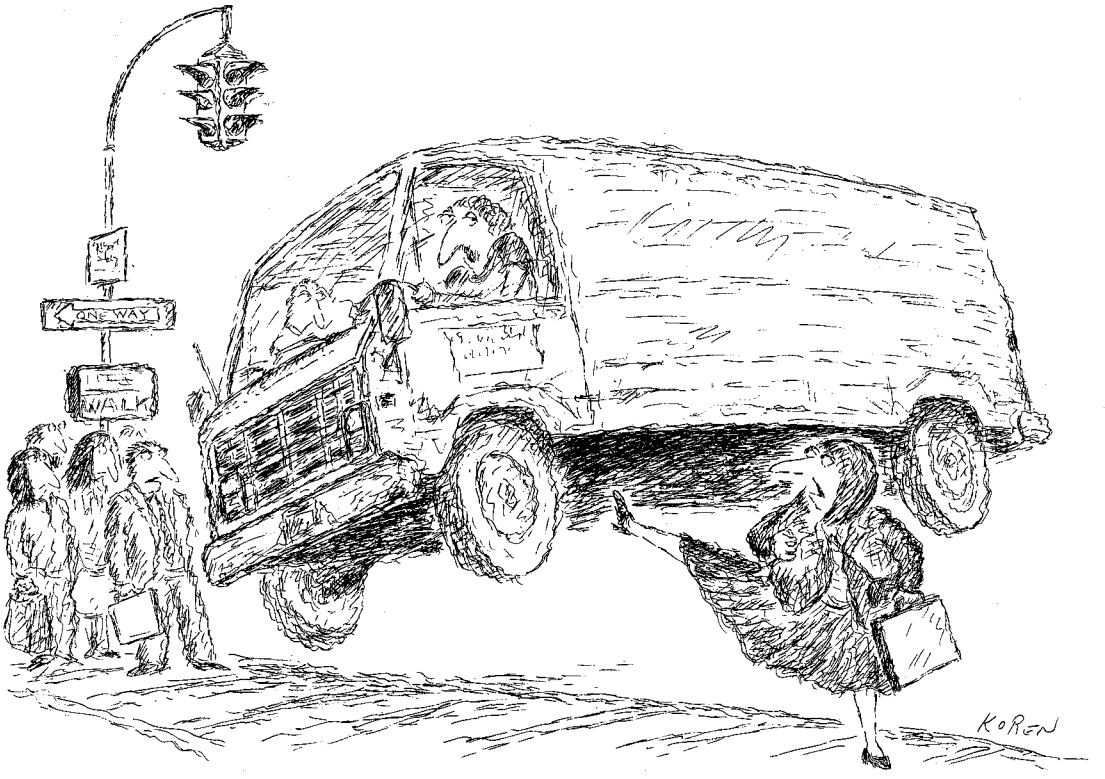
Slinky all coiled up in itself, picture books, drawing tablets, and remnants of a hundred miniature zoos, forts, shopping centers, and such, the pieces recombined in Toby's imagination to form the characters of some dire cosmopolitan epic.

I burrow deep into my notebook as my sister-in-law pulls out the old Modern Library Giant edition of "Ulysses," the orange jacket encased in plastic. She maintains the reading level of an academic but is hurt if you ask why she doesn't do something besides be married to my brother. Or she would be hurt if I dared ask. I've delved into "Ulysses" so often I recently took it up in Italian to keep the quest venturesome. "Ulisse," translated with astonishing resourcefulness by Giulio de Angelis. It comes complete with notes and commentary, just as I do. Yet my sister-in-law knows it better than I, can even recite the chapter titles in order. She holds absolutely still when she reads.



"In this city, Jack, you learn to respect the pedestrian."

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Toby ignores us, digging, patting, piling. A grand, circular moat. A lump of sand in the center. Flags at the perimeter. Soldiers, rustics, exotic animals, and Hollywood extraterrestrials lining up to get in. Toby growls to himself as he works, like a dog fussing at a sock. "I'm making a sand tower," he announces at one point.

When my sister-in-law excuses herself to ready dinner, Toby and I dart suspicious glances at each other. He waits till she disappears over the dunes, then says, "Do you want to help me dribble?"

"Sure."

He hands me a pail and leads the way to the sea. "Look out for octopus," he warns.

He's going to grouch at me, I know. He always does.

"You fill it with water," he says. "It has to be just right. Not like that!"

He keeps pushing me.

"Like this," he says.

It takes me eight dips to satisfy him; apparently the water has to fill the pail tight to the rim without spilling. How often in this life one must negotiate a walk along the blade when the topic at hand is absolutely nothing at all. How often one plays one's life for trivial stakes. With certain people, everything matters.

"Now, watch," says Toby.

This is dribbling: you ease the bottom end of the pail upward, leading the water to plop onto the sand, creating a mason's effect on the walls of your fortress. You decorate your power.

"Now you," says Toby, with a sense of challenge.

"Why don't you show me again? I don't have the feel of it yet."

Growling, he grabs my pail and throws it off to the side. "I didn't like that water," he explains.

I return to my story, a sad tale of growing up and pulling away in a small Southern town. Toby busies himself with his dribbling.

In the city, the scene is fury, speed, and ice, sheer ice. Holding your own, you may accidentally alienate one of the four or five most influential people in your professional or social or romantic life, and you may spend years working off the blunder. But on the beach nothing happens, and everything is forgivable. The happy time crawls past. You can't go wrong.

"Hey, Toby, what's on for dinner?" I ask.

Toby looks out at the sea. "No, there won't be any dinner for us at all. Can birds swim?"

"Why won't there be dinner?"

"My daddy is mad at Mommy, and they aren't going to feed us. I heard them crashing last night, so that means they're mad at someone. Do they like you?"

"Your mother does."

"Is she your sister?"

"No. Your dad is my brother."

"I don't think he likes us."

Toby's dog comes snorting up the beach from the west: a large terrier who moves with the frozen despair of an old man and the mild curiosity of a baby, named, by the child, with a child's logic, Tober.

"Get away, Tober!" Toby

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screeches. "Get away, you sneaky hound!"

The dog gently investigates the sea, sniffing at the waves. Ken cannot be far away. He is always walking the dog, possibly to see what stir he can inspire with his fame.

Possibly. This is a sophisticated beach, the cream of Boston hip (if there is such a thing). He would be in no danger from autograph crazies. But people would surely recognize him—"as seen on television," the ultimate American credential—and buzz like wasps in a pancake house.

I see my brother in the distance, walking slowly around the curl of a dune, his hands in the pockets of his shorts, the long-thighed light-brown kind you only see on straight men, brothers and fathers.

Tober noses up to Toby, who stares at him for a bit, then gives him a push.

"You aren't very nice to your pet," I venture.

"He comes around too much. And he snapped at the doorman. They bought a muzzle for him. But you know what? I hid it in my toy chest. Sometimes I wear it in my room. Tober isn't really mine anyway. He only likes my father."

My brother is almost upon us now.

"Hey, Tober," I call out. "Here, Tobes."

Tober looks at me, starts over, halts. It's not always easy to know what you're supposed to do in this family.

Toby eyes the beast with disgust. "Make him nap," he says.

And Ken arrives.

"How are you coming, my friend?" my brother asks me. He doesn't act like a newscaster but like a man who might know a few.

"I'm doing just fine."

"Good man. Toby, did you remember to put water in Tober's dish this morning?"

This means Toby didn't, but the boy has unconcernedly returned to his sand tower. "He didn't look thirsty."

"I hate to think that a poor dumb animal is going without water because a little boy was too lazy to bother with him."

Toby and I glance at the dog, quietly settled on his haunches, looking far out to sea. A handsome, suave animal, not the kind to dance on your leg or suddenly begin howling when company comes.

"He was naughty yesterday," says Toby. "So I'm not giving him water for a month."

Toby's father kneels to reason with his son. "Toby," he begins. "You can't punish a living creature by depriving it of food."

Toby looks down, but resolutely. "You took my allowance away," he says.

"That's just money."

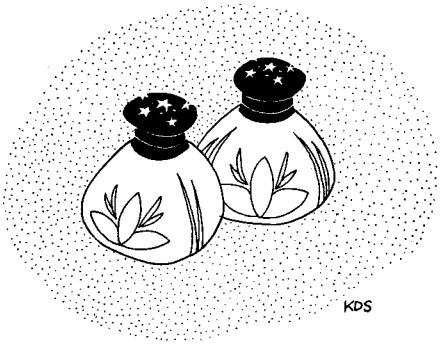
"I was going to buy candy with it. Candy is food."

Toby's father grasps Toby's little child's shoulders and tells him, in the voice that tolerantly introduces those irritating responsible opinions of the opposing viewpoint, "Listen here, Toby, have I ever deprived you of nourishment? Have you ever gone hungry?"

"Yes."

"No, you haven't."

"Last week," Toby insists, "you didn't take me to the puppet play."



"That was nearly six months ago, first off, and second, if you remember, you weren't taken to the puppet show because you got chocolate all over the television screen."

Patricide.

"Toby," he goes on, "look at me when I talk to you."

My family is made of those who demand to be looked at when they talk to you and those who look away when they hear. My brother started as a looker-away; now he has to be looked at. No wonder he became a newscaster. An entire city must look at him when he talks. I visualize his television audience sitting before their sets in highchairs, wearing bibs discolored by strained prunes. Their faces are sad as they are reproached and reasoned with.

"Hey," I put in. "Why don't you tell Toby about the time I pushed you off the roof?"

My brother ignores this; Toby looks up.

"I think you'd better take Tober up to the house," my brother goes on, "and see if—"

"What roof? Our roof? Did he push you off that high?"

"Toby—"

Toby looks at me. "When did you push him? Was I there?"

"No. But I was thinking of you at the time."

"What's that supposed to mean?" my brother asks me. "We were kids then."

GRAVY

No other word will do. For that's what it was. Gravy.
Gravy these past ten years.
Alive, sober, working, loving and
being loved by a good woman. Eleven years
ago he was told he had six months to live
at the rate he was going. And he was going
nowhere but down. So he changed his ways
somehow. He quit drinking! And the rest?
After that it was *all* gravy, every minute
of it, up to and including when he was told about,
well, some things that were breaking down and
building up inside his head. "Don't weep for me,"
he said to his friends. "I'm a lucky man.
I've had ten years longer than I or anyone
expected. Pure gravy. And don't forget it."

—Raymond Carver
(1938-1988)

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"I knew you'd have a child someday. I did it for him."

"Thanks a lot."

"He broke his arm," I tell Toby. "I broke your father's arm. He had to wear a cast for a month, and they threw him off the football team." I ask my brother, "Remember?"

"All right now, Toby, you march straight up to the house and assume some responsibility for Tober. He's your dog."

Toby claps his hands like a pasha, and Tober meticulously gets to his feet, capping the motion with an elegant stretch of his spine, from rigid neck to apologetic haunches.

"Tober, come here!" Toby screams. "You mental case!"

"Not so loud," my brother directs. "Go on up, now."

"Keep watch on my sand tower," Toby warns us. "Don't let the other people come and wreck it."

"There are no other people," my brother tells him—one of those apparently aimless statements, mere punctuation from the sound of them, that, on the contrary, burst from the heart. Who but a fifteen-year-old runaway would get so much out of the statement "There are no other people"?

As Toby and the dog proceed up the beach back to the house, I appear engrossed in my work. I am writing gibberish in order to look inaccessible; a useless defense against a man who remembers what you were like when you were eight.

"Ellen says you brought her a present," my brother offers. No one is inaccessible to a newsman. Impenetrable, maybe: but approachable, absolutely.

"I got both of you a present."

"A mayonnaise jar, was it? Sounds very handy."

"It doesn't just hold mayonnaise. It helps make it. The recipe is printed on the glass. Bloomingdale's."

"She really likes you, you know."

Out come the weapons. We estimate our worth in the quality of the people who like us—as witness the hearty bantering that goes on on news shows between the features and the commercial breaks. A Boston friend taped some of my brother's programs for me, and on one of them it seems to me—it *seems*—as if the other newspeople turn their backs on him and cut him out of their banter, leaving him to shift his papers and chuckle at imaginary colleagues out of camera range.

"I enjoyed the sauna very much, and may I say this is the friendliest bank in my whole business experience?"

• •

"Toby says you aren't going to give us dinner," I say, as my brother kicks shells and pebbles down at the waterline. "He heard you and Ellen quarrelling."

"Toby's doing a very awkward time nowadays. You shouldn't encourage him. It's hard enough to keep him in line without you telling him stories about brothers throwing each other off roofs."

"Why not? You did it to me and I did it to you. It was the great moment of my childhood. I wanted to share it with him."

My brother works his way onto the crest of the tide flat, kicking gusts of sand as he travels. "You know how easily he gets stirred up," he goes on.

"It's funny how cool you were as a child, and how high-strung Toby is. I wouldn't think passion would run in your family."

"He's just a kid so far." My brother is kicking up whole wads of sand now, aimlessly, business on his mind. "What'll you do with that writing piece when it's done? Does it go in *Granta*?"

"Why are you stamping around in the sand like that?"

He shrugged. "High spirits. Why even ask?"

"Because you've even kicked Toby's sand tower to bits."

My brother sees what he has done.

"I'd hate to be in your sneakers when Toby gets back and sees what you did," I tell him. "He takes his beach sports very seriously."

"So do you."

I have to laugh at that. "I envy Toby his enthusiasms," I say. "He gets such a thrill out of everything, whether he loves them or despises them. He

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feels. Were we ever like that? Puppet plays and candy?"

"I wasn't," my brother says.

"How come you ran away from us?" I suddenly ask. "Do you expect Toby to run away from you?"

He is speechless.

Barking and shouting from across the dunes signal the return of Toby and Tober. They race down to us like a circus on a four-a-day booking. Toby is heading for the water, but his father catches him as he passes, pulls him up, and tosses him into the air as easily as if he were confetti. Toby says, "Daddy!" with delight as he comes down; only this, but this is enough.

I pet the panting dog.

"Toby," says the newscaster. "Listen to bad news. I wrecked your sand castle. Accidentally. I was kicking at the sand without thinking. I'm sorry."

Openmouthed, Toby turns to me.

"I didn't do it," I warn him.

"What if you get a spanking now?" Toby asks, turning to his father, looking up to find him, taking hold of his hand. "Or no dinner?"

"We don't punish anyone for accidents, Toby," his father lectures. "You know that."

"Yes," Toby agrees. "I have to go finger-paint."

"O.K." His father turns to me. "O.K., my friend?" (Why do *I* have to render an opinion?) My brother slaps Toby's behind lightly and the child runs up the beach, Tober dragging decorously after him.

O.K., he says. Look, don't waste a smile on me—but my brother does, a television smile suited to a quaint human-interest feature, perhaps a convention of street-food aficionados in South Boston. "See you at dinner," he says.

I go back to writing my story. Bits of the day flip into the text, a field expedient. Bits of every day; it makes people nervous. "You snitched!" a bag lady cried at me once, on Park Avenue.

"No, I didn't," I said; but I was thinking of some story.

"You told how I made a commotion with a cigarillo in the no-smoking section of the Carnegie Cinema show!"

"Never."

"No?"

"No," I repeated.

She shrugged, looked away, and coughed. "So what happens next?"

ON the beach, next is always a meal. You pay out a certain number of minutes and then comes food, the four of us at table, all eyes aimed at some imagined central point of contact. When we gather at the board, I babble, dispersing the attacks. I am like a bag lady in the scattered energy of my references. I speak of Louise Brooks, of "The Egoist," of Schubert's song cycles. They nod. They ask Intelligent Questions. And they *are* intelligent—I mean, they read *Granta*. They feel they must encourage me, my sister-in-law because anyone she is related to becomes wonderful by rules of love loyalty, and my brother because it is not entirely useless, in his line of work, to be connected to a writer. Still, he'll never quite be able to see me as anything but an infant rebel, reckless, bold for his years, but ultimately ineffectual. He treats me like someone who may have to be soothed, even humored, perhaps disarmed, at any moment.

This only exacerbates my defiance, of course. From the moment I enter the house that my brother lives in—to my sister-in-law's welcoming half smile, as warm as one blanket too many on a surprisingly balmy November night—I am at war.

My brother cuts greens for his Caesar salad, which, for some reason, is genuinely cordon bleu. But, then, Ken was always a stickler for High Style in everything he did. I hear, from secure sources, that back in Boston notables of the local great world stare over his shoulder as he prepares it. Oh, it looks simple. Who can't make a salad? They can't—not like his salad, anyway. Theirs is correct; his is superb. They come back again and again to watch him, and he pays them no heed. He acts as if no one should be able to do what he does.

The Schwarzenegger String Quartet

From Toby's room comes the festive din of medleys drawn from the Walt Disney versions of "Snow White," "Pinocchio," and "Alice in Wonderland" on a tape I made for him last year. Occasionally, Toby sings along. I idly glance in at the door. Toby and Tober are sitting on the floor, engrossed in the act of listening; both of them are wearing cowboy hats and neckerchiefs.

When I return to the kitchen, my sister-in-law hands me a glass of white

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wine. I take it outside to watch the sun burn red over the water. I try to think of my latest story and all this real life. How inconvenient that work merges with truth. I was planning to model myself on Evelyn Waugh, not Thomas Mann. Yet even Waugh turned Mann in the end. Writers have a hundred dodges but a thousand revelations. Every so often, some of my friends ask pettishly why I never write about them. "But I do," I respond, as nicely as possible. Then they grow uneasy.

Amazingly enough, I enjoy these summer visits up here, so far off my turf. I like the break it makes in my city rhythm, the sense the place gives me of owing nothing to everybody—professionally, of course. If only I owed nothing to absolutely anyone socially, emotionally, and historically, I would be white clean free.

A family forms around me as I sit on the deck. Something licks the back of my hand: Tober, on devotion patrol in his capacity as household devotee. My sister-in-law joins us. A breeze animates the scene. Now Toby is here, querulously asking about the parentage of Donald Duck's three nephews. He knows they have none to speak of, but he wants to see what he will be told. His father comes out, balancing his hand on Toby's head as the twilight deepens.

I do not need to look at them to know how it appears. She is gazing upon my brother and he is gazing down at the boy and the boy is gazing at all of us, one after the other. For a moment, I luxuriate in the sentimentality of knowing that, whatever else happens, he will be raised in love. How terrifyingly important that is. Then I feel manipulated by this

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frenzy of feeling and swear to avenge the dishonor by styling all three of them as villains in my most scabrous stories.

My brother takes my wineglass to refill it, and Toby sits next to me, holding a juice drink poured to resemble a cocktail. "Now you could tell me more about when you pushed my father off the roof," he says.

"I don't think I ought to."

"Why?"

"That's a good question."

"Then why did you tell me before, on the beach?"

"That's an even better one."

"Tell me a story anyway."

"Once upon a time," I begin—for these are the easiest stories to invent and the most comfortable to tell, set hundreds of years ago among perfect strangers—"there was a little boy who lived all by himself in a great sand tower in the middle of a forest."

"What was his name?" Toby asks.

"He had none. He had lived all alone as long as he could remember, so he had never needed a name. One day, a knight rode by on a beautiful black horse, and the knight was encased from head to foot in resplendent silver armor."

"What was the horse's name?" Toby asks.

"Toby, you shouldn't interrupt the storyteller," his mother gently chides, her doting look slipping from him to me and back.

"The knight's armor shone so brilliantly in the sunlight that the little boy, looking down from the window at the very top of his tower, could actually see himself. It was the first time he had ever done so, for there were no mirrors in his tower. None whatsoever. There was no thing to look into, no reflection—"

"Did he have Cinemax?" Toby asks, absently yawning.

"Hush. Now, the little boy was surprised to see the knight. But he was even more surprised to see himself. And from his window high above the forest he called down to the knight, 'Who are you?' "

"Here you go, my friend," says my brother, returning with refills of the drinks.

"But the knight thought the little boy was speaking to his own reflection, and so he said nothing. The little boy was consumed with wonder, for he suddenly realized that he must be lonely in his tower. He longed to go down and say hello to the knight and find out some things about the world. But there was no way down through the tower. Nor was there any way for the knight to climb up to him. The little boy felt very sad."

Toby stretches out with his head in my lap.

"The knight was sad, too, for he had been wandering in the forest for many days, having lost his way. He feared he might wander forever, for this forest was so big that no one who strayed into it from outside ever found his way out. But there was nothing for the knight to do but move on, and he spurred his horse to pursue his journey. The little boy again cried out, 'Who are you?' But the knight happened to be passing behind a great oak tree, which hid his armor from sight and thus cut off the boy's reflection. So this time the knight assumed he was being addressed, and he thought he should answer the question. He should tell the little boy who he was. . . ."

Toby has fallen asleep.

"This tyke is all tuckered out," I tell his parents. "He didn't even wait for dinner."

"Did Ken read to you?" my sister-in-law asks. "When you were boys?"

"He didn't have to. I wasn't grouchy."

"Did he?"

She is looking at him and he is looking at her.

"Well, my mother didn't, and my dad was away a lot. . . ." Now they are looking at me. "I suppose somebody had to do the reading."

She takes his hand. "*Did* he?"

"Please don't leak."

"Don't what?"

"When the little boy asked the knight who he was, what did the knight answer?" my brother asks.

I look at him for a moment. "He answered, 'I have the same name as you.' "

My brother frowns. "Unusual repartee."

Toby stirs in my arms.

"I have the same name," I observe, "as all of you."

My sister-in-law smiles. But my brother, puzzled once too often this day, looks at me as if he does not know who I am. —Ethan Mordden

"After we win the final takeover battle, what then?"

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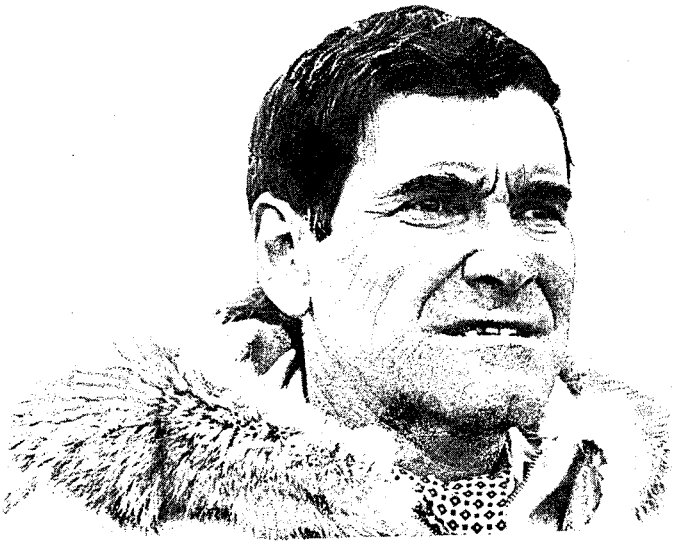
PROFILES

THE MAN



Courtesy Alice Houston

IN back of James Houston's fishing cottage in the Queen Charlotte Islands is a small outbuilding that he has converted into a workroom. The outside doorknob is a wood fish, and the inside one is a merganser, both of them carved and stained by him. Here he writes or draws for three or four hours every morning between five and nine. The property adjoins the Tlell, a curving tidal river that glitters like quicksilver and is considered by some to be one of the great salmon-fishing rivers in the world. From the window over his desk he can keep an eye on the salmon jumping, and there are times when he has to decide which is the greater good: to stick to his work schedule or to put down his pencil and take up his fly rod.

The Queen Charlottes lie off the coast of British Columbia, some five hundred miles northwest of Vancouver. On clear days, one can see the mountains of Alaska. The house, which Houston bought in 1978, is surrounded by a provincial park, and he and his wife, Alice, spend several months a year there. The island's other inhabitants are largely fishermen and loggers, hippies, who arrived in the sixties, and the Haida Indians, whose ancestors got there considerably earlier. The rest of the year, the Houstons live in Stonington, Connecticut, in a handsome eighteenth-century house, where he continues to rise at an unholy hour and put in the allotted time at his desk. From Stonington he makes periodic trips to New York with designs for Steuben Glass, and from there he goes upstate, to Corning, where he works with a gaffer on the blowing-room floor. Then he's off to more distant places in the United States and Canada to lecture and advise, and to the Canadian Arctic to see his old friends the Eskimos, with whom he lived for fourteen years. He is the author of fourteen children's books, a number of which have been translated into many languages. He has written four novels; one, "The White Dawn," was made into a film in 1973, for which he wrote the screenplay and helped build the igloos. Last year, he received the Citation of Merit from the Royal Canadian Academy of Arts and an honorary doctorate from Dalhousie University, in Nova Scotia, adding a few more entries to the string of initials after his name.

In the pre-Stonington days, there was a farm in Rhode Island and an apartment in New York, and before that—from 1948 to 1962—his address was c/o Eastern Arctic Patrol Mail, Head P.O., Ottawa, Canada. Those who have known him in his various habitats say that he looks at home only in the Queen Charlottes and in the Arctic. Elsewhere, he seems like a visitor in his own house, not because of his looks, which are rugged and lively, or his manner, which is both friendly and formal, or his clothes, which are conventional, but because of a watchfulness that gives him the slightly displaced air of an outsider. He has the eyes of someone scanning the horizon for signs of life. He misses nothing, perhaps because he is an artist and perhaps because for many years his survival depended on a keen eye missing nothing.

James Archibald Houston was born in 1921, into a Toronto family of Scotch Presbyterians. "And, boy, never did a kid have more support than I," he says. "My sister, Barbara, and I were devoted to our parents and they to us. I had the happiest childhood—I didn't have to overcome a damn thing. My father sold English yard goods for men's suiting in central and western Canada. He was away four or five months of the year, and on his selling trips he'd loop through Canada, going to places that amused him—particularly Indian places, like Prince Rupert, the Queen Charlottes, Fort Churchill. He was fascinated with Indians. Once, when I was seven or eight, a box the size of a grand piano without legs arrived at home, causing wild excitement on the part of me and my sister. We tried to guess what was in the box, and finally Mother said to us, 'No, there will be bones in that box,' and, sure enough, there were dinosaur bones. Nowadays, no one would dare move dinosaur bones, but this was in the twenties. The big thrill when we were little kids was when Mother would drive us to Toronto's Union Station late at night to meet my father's train. Father would get off, with a little leather grip, homburg, beautiful necktie—spiffily dressed, smiling and laughing. The next morning, we'd run in and jump on our parents' bed, and Father would say, 'Reach in my grip, Jimmy.' Out would come two pairs of delicious-smelling soft moccasins made of smoked moosehide, with huge beaded vamps. The feel and the smell of those moccasins is still with me. Then he'd get out a pad of order forms and start drawing all the unusual Indian things he'd seen, and telling us all about them." When young Houston had scarlet fever, at the age of eight, his books had to be burned, and his mother gave him a blank notebook, suggesting that he make his own story. He did so, both text and illustrations. He sold his first drawing for three dollars when he was eight, and although he was allowed to spend only twenty-five cents, drawing struck him

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"We're so glad you could come, and here's a copy of all the recipes Emily used tonight."

• •

as an ideal way to make a living.

The family had a summer cottage on Lake Simcoe, north of Toronto. Among the children's companions there were Minnie, a young Ojibwa woman who lived nearby and acted as nursemaid and housemaid, and Nels, her father, who became Houston's friend and instructor. (The Ojibwa are the Chippewa—"Ojibwa" said fast.) "Minnie could run like a deer—leap right out of her shoes and catch me in an instant," he recalls. "Nels taught me Indian cunning. We learned things no city children ever learn—special ways to catch a whitefish, how to interpret the clucks of grouse, how to whistle a woodchuck right out of the ground, how to sharpen razor blades around the inside of a glass. Nels could make a five-cent razor blade go three years. Of course, he didn't shave every day—maybe once a week. Nels and his brother Herb were fantastic shots: one shell, one bird. I shot my first grouse at the age of nine. I was overwhelmed by Lake Simcoe."

Houston drifted through public school in Toronto. He wasn't interested in math or grammar; he liked history and oral composition (a combination of storytelling and public speaking), but it was art that really interested him, and he was encouraged in his artistic endeavors both at home and at school. His teachers, impressed by his talent, indulged him, and, as a result, he had a very unbalanced education and considers himself uneducated. He won a Guggenheim art scholarship, and came under the spell of Dr. Arthur Lismer, who ran the art school at the Art Gallery of Toronto and was acknowledged to be the best children's art teacher in Canada. Lismer went to Africa at some point, and returned with a recording of drums and singing. One morning, he danced into the classroom wearing a huge African mask, all straw and exotic painting. Houston remembers thinking, He has walked on the soil of Africa, paddled on rivers full of crocodiles. "I was hooked forever on primitive peoples," he says. "Lismer changed everything for me. I was going to travel and draw."

And so he has. He attended the Ontario College of Art for a year, and then, in 1940, volunteered for the Canadian Army. He served with the Toronto Scottish Regiment for five years. At first, the colonel had him making diagrams on oilcloth to show the trajectory of heavy machine guns (oilcloth didn't wear out in the rain), but when the first Canadian military ski school was formed Houston became an instructor. This took him to Labrador and to northern British Columbia. He was always trying to get even farther north, but never managed it.

After the war, Houston vamped for a time. He built a log cabin in Grand'Mère, Quebec, and lived there for a few months until he could get a student visa and go to France. He finally got to Paris in 1947, and there he attended L'École Grande Chaumière, specializing in life drawing. Fast sketching was his specialty, and still is; he would as soon be caught without his trousers as without paper and pencil. He lived under the eaves of the Hôtel Napoléon-Bonaparte, on the Right Bank, and learned the language from a "sleeping dictionary" (a phrase used by Hudson's Bay Company traders, as in "I see you've been studying with a sleeping dictionary"). He had been in Paris less than a year when his mother wrote him to the effect that she didn't know what he was doing over there but it was making her terribly nervous. (His father had died in 1939.) He came home, started a small commercial-art firm, and took a good look at Montreal and Toronto: neither compared favorably with Paris. Men dressed in bulky blue serge suits and women wore tight girdles. He decided to try to go up north. The Hudson's Bay Company ship went only once a year to supply the Arctic posts, and had been sunk off Baffin Island the year before. Houston talked to the station-

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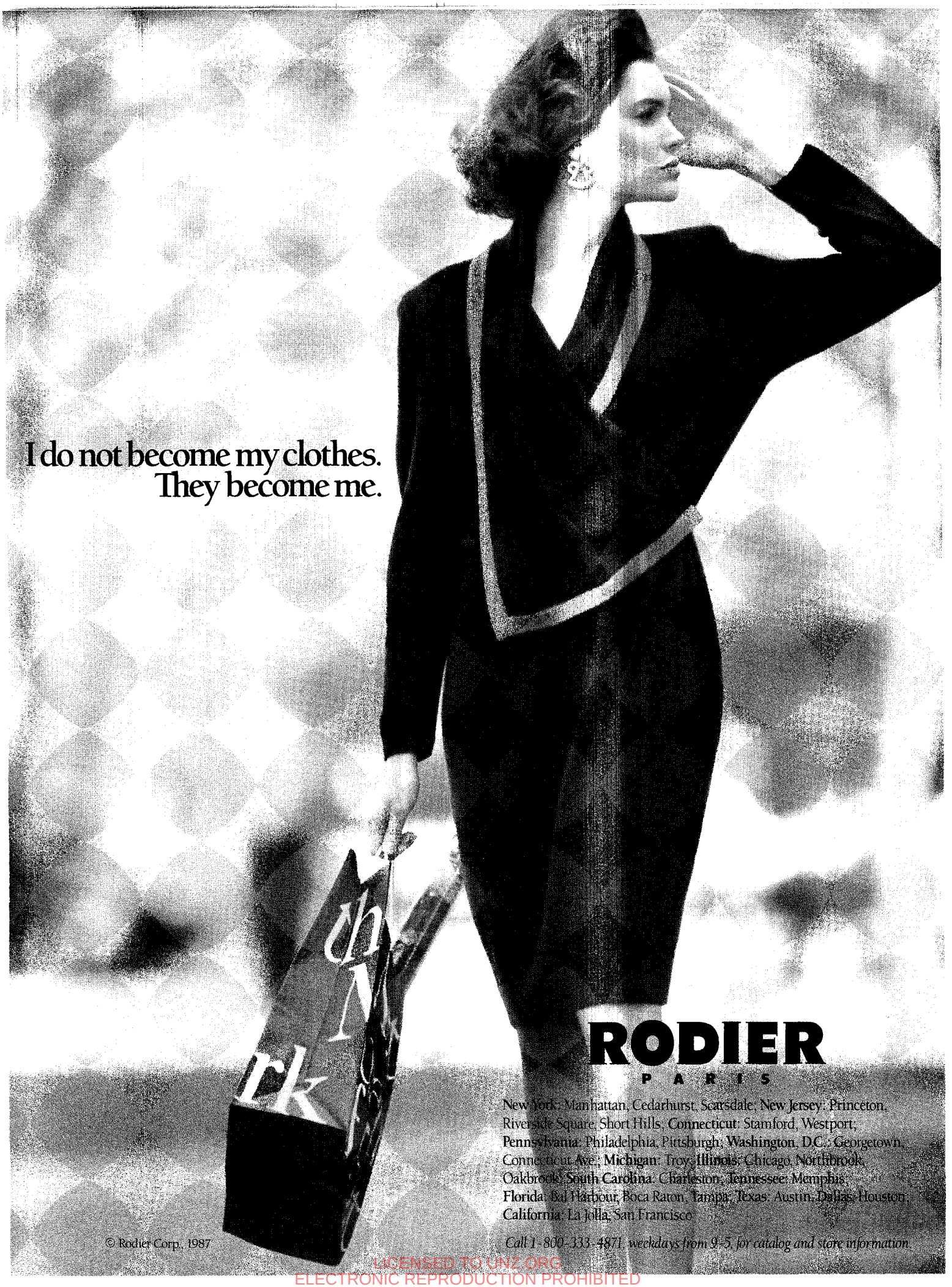

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master in Grand'Mère, who told him he could take a train to Churchill, Manitoba, or to Moosonee, Ontario, and that Moosonee was cheaper. Houston bought a one-way ticket to Moosonee for nineteen dollars, took a sleeping bag, sketchbooks, clothing, a toothbrush, and a can of peaches a girl had given him, and went up on a little railroad. When he arrived at Moosonee, he met a young Swampy Cree Indian with an outboard engine on his canoe, who offered him a ride to Moose Factory, an island on the Moose River, where the H.B.C. still had a trading post, overseen by a jolly factor who let him stay in the staff house. The staff was largely Scottish —Canadians didn't go into the Arctic then, perhaps because the pay was too low. In Moose Factory the Indians were in shawls and braids and knee-high moccasins. It was almost untouched by civilization. "I stayed at Moose Factory for about a month, drawing Swampy Cree Indians and wondering where my father had slept twenty years before." He made friends with George Charity, a bush pilot, and Dr. Herbert Harper, the resident surgeon for Indian Health Services. The day before he planned to return south, Charity burst into Houston's room and told him that the doctor had an emergency near Inukjuak (formerly Port Harrison), seven hundred miles north, in Arctic Quebec. An Eskimo woman and her baby had been bitten by dogs, and if Houston was willing to woggle the gas Charity would fly him there free. "We went beyond Inukjuak, to Canso Bay. Some Eskimos hurried the doctor up to the tent where the baby and mother were, and I looked around me. I saw short, sturdy brown people, all talking away and laughing. I saw rocks, the autumn tundra, long skeins of ice drifting south to melt in Hudson Bay, and I knew this was the place I'd been looking for." When Dr. Harper announced that he was leaving with the mother and child, Houston said he was staying.

It was September, and Houston stayed at Canso Bay and Inukjuak for five months. The Eskimos there were eating raw fish and raw meat. Houston didn't at first, but hunger changed all that. Out seal hunting with them, he went through the ice on five separate occasions. The temperature was fifteen

"Great weaponry."

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below (nobody figured in wind-chill factors then), and each time he fell through his Eskimo companions told him to start running *right now* back to camp, a distance of five miles. "We sometimes thought we'd have to give you away," one of them told him later. "We didn't know what to do with you, you were so clumsy." Along with survival tips, he set about learning the Inuktitut language. It took him four and a half years; like everyone else, the only words he knew were "igloo" and "kayak." For important communications, he found, words are not used—a result of dog-team travel and hunting in howling winds. "Say I was out on Ennadai Lake, going to visit a family. The father would leap off our sled, run to the left, run back to the sled, repeat different movements on the other side, then kneel on top of the sled. He'd explain, 'I'm telling my wife I've got you with me, and to bring in meat, thaw it.' His wife he knew would have been watching us with an old brass telescope, 'the bring-near glass,' they call it. She would get the message, and put caribou meat by the lamp." From the beginning, Houston made drawings of Eskimos. They called him Saomik, "the left-handed one." Sometimes they would take the drawing away and make drawings of him. When he couldn't act out a question, he would draw it, and often they could draw the answer.

On his third day, a hunter came up to him with a clenched fist and opened it to reveal a small stone carving of a caribou, with ivory eyes and horns. He presented the carving to Houston. Houston had seen Eskimo carvings only in a museum, some of them a thousand years old, and he was bowled over. In return, he cracked out the can of peaches and gave a slice to everyone in the snowhouse. Some held the fruit in their mouths for an hour. The Eskimos peeled the label off the can, licked it, and stuck it on the wall of the igloo, just as they often did with Houston's drawings—they put birds on the ceiling, fish on the floor. He was given two more small carvings, and shortly after that he walked with hunters along the coast to the H.B.C. in Inukjuak and asked the factor how old he

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thought the carvings were. The factor examined them and said, "At least a week. How long did it take you to get in here?" Far from being dashed by this news, Houston was excited.

When he returned to Grand'Mère a few months later, he brought a number of small soapstone sculptures. He wanted to go back to the Arctic and start collecting them seriously, but he needed financing. He found a benefactor in the form of C. J. G. Molson, of beer-family fame. Through the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, Molson supplied a thousand rounds of ammunition and a thousand dollars with which to buy Eskimo art. Credit was arranged for the Eskimos through an H.B.C. system of chits, and Houston hurried back "into the country" (an expression that refers to the Arctic). The thousand dollars was quickly exhausted, and he added five hundred dollars of his own—proceeds from his drawings. "For the next couple of years, I ran around with the Eskimos." (When Houston is thinking in English, he tends to use the word "Eskimo;" he is critical of the use of "Inuit" unless one is speaking Inuktitut. "It's like saying 'Nipponese,' " he says.) He lived in snowhouses or tents; sometimes he stayed with the Anglicans, the Oblates, or the H.B.C. "I had no fixed address," Houston recalls. "I bunked in wherever I could. I lived off the end of a rifle, and tried to be polite." He made three or four trips to Montreal, and, tapping a latent entrepreneurial talent, developed a market for the carvings, thus making the Eskimos of the region less dependent on trapping.

IN September of 1950, while Houston was helping to mount an exhibition of Eskimo carvings at the Guild, Alma Bardon, a junior reporter on the Montreal *Star*, asked him for an interview, and he agreed on condition that she go to lunch with him. They were married three months later. Houston was due to go back into the country in January. Grand'Mère is in the Snow Belt, and he attempted to break in his future wife to Arctic conditions by walking her fourteen miles in cold weather. The Royal Canadian Air Force flew them to Goose Bay, in Labrador, and from there the U. S. Air Force flew them to Frobisher Bay, on the east coast of Baffin Island, where Houston had arranged, by Morse key, to have two Eskimo friends meet them with dogsled and team. Two months later, they arrived at their destination, Cape Dorset, after a journey of some six hundred miles, and getting there was not half the fun. At one point, they had to climb a forty-foot-high frozen waterfall. The three men carried twenty-two dogs up by the harness one at a time, then the sleds, then helped Alma. At the top, they built a snowhouse, as they had done at the bottom the preceding night. Although it took a full day to pull off this operation, their route was then the best way to get from Frobisher Bay to Cape Dorset. They visited Eskimo camps along the coast, the Eskimos helping to build snowhouses for Houston and his new wife. (Two skilled people working together, one inside, one outside, can build a snowhouse in about forty-five minutes. A snowhouse is a specific kind of igloo—igloo is the general term for all Eskimo structures made with blocks of packed snow.) By the time they reached Cape Dorset, the dogs were nearly dead of starvation. The human beings, like the dogs, had been living off what little seal meat they had and the last contents of a grub box. "I'll tell you what hungry is," Houston says. "When we arrived, we had some tea leaves that had been rewatered in a bucket for five or six days, getting paler and paler. I scooped out the leaves and threw them on the snow. The camp kids rushed out and ate them."

He and his wife set up housekeeping in an old Baffin trading house, and used it as a base. "Allie was divinely suited to Eskimo life," Houston says. "In the following year and a half, we managed to visit all the camps in West Baffin Island—the western half of the island—an area nearly twice the size of Maine." In 1952, Houston was made Northern Service Officer for this territory. At that time, there were fifty-eight families, with a total of three hundred and forty-one people, in thirteen nomadic camps under his jurisdiction. A school and a nursing station were started. A second husband-and-wife team came in—he taught, she nursed. This was the beginning of federal day schools and nursing there, and Houston says that in the light of history he's not sure they did it the right way. "No kids came to the school at first; it sat there empty for months. So, finally, we hired the hunter with the most children as caretaker, and made the job contingent upon his children coming in to school. This worked, and later lots of kids came in the summer. They went there for fun, and especially for the hot cocoa at midmorning, but they went back out to the camps with their families for the winter. In the fall of 1952, we decided to go to Ikeraksak, where we would spend the winter and Alma would try an experiment: running a school that would move with the hunters' families when *they* moved. The idea was to bring the teacher to the kids, and not break up camps, but in the middle of the winter Allie got appendicitis. The Eskimos knew what she had, and told her that she would die, but, through the combined efforts of many Eskimos, the H.B.C., Search and Rescue, and the Governor-General of Canada, Vincent Massey, they got her to a waiting team of doctors at Goose Bay in five days—by which time the appendix had ruptured. She survived, and went back into the country for a year, but then she became pregnant and had to go out again. White women were prohibited by the government from giving birth in the Arctic." The Houstons' son John was born in June, 1954, in Ottawa, and when he was three months old Alma and the baby went out to Cape Dorset. John was brought up "in the hood," and today is said by some to be the finest interpreter of Inuktitut in Canada.

By this time, the government had decided that the Houstons should have a house. Houston designed it, and asked his Eskimo friends to choose its site. "One day, I saw Pootagook, a respected elder, sitting on a caribou skin at the base of a granite hill in the middle of nowhere, and that's where the house was built. The house still exists, and hasn't moved an inch, but it has been expanded into a hotel. It was a two-story clapboard house, with triple windows, and four space heaters sunk in the floor, so it was reasonably warm, although too big. The Eskimos thought some of the furnishings extremely odd: *Playpen*? You've got that baby in a cage, why isn't he on

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somebody's back? *Separate bed* for the child?"

In 1955, Houston became the first Civil Administrator for West Baffin Island, and, as such, was officially designated to fill the following posts: Crafts Officer, Explosives Officer, Mineral Claims Officer, Post Officer (the government icebreaker came in once a year to deliver mail and supplies, and went out with the sick), Game Officer, Fisheries Officer, and Dog Officer. In addition, he had to write monthly reports, most of which the government tells Houston have been routinely destroyed. "Dog Officer scared me more than anything. There were up to a thousand dogs in the camps, and they're dangerous when they're hungry. They galloped around freely, and you prayed they wouldn't eat someone's child. For all the dogs to be tied, several tons of chain would have been required, which was unthinkable. Forget a sealskin line—the dogs would eat it. And they'd chew through a rope. The older children looked after the younger ones; dogs can be frightened—snarled at, or stoned. Once, a small child was eaten—he belonged to the owner of the dog. I took a rudimentary first-aid course from the surgeons and the dentist on the icebreaker, and did what I could. I learned to give shots. My medicine kit was a fishing box, and whenever someone was sick out in the camps he'd say, 'Look in the fishing box.' Igloos killed babies as if they were mosquitoes—they were damp and cold, and a lot of babies died of pneumonia. Most of the dogs had trichinosis; a couple of times almost a whole camp was lost from trichinosis. And there was t.b. If a mother had a positive X-ray, we would tell her that she had to go out on the icebreaker to one of the distant sanatoriums. There were some sad scenes on the beach when the icebreaker was about to leave. To the Eskimos a woman was neither alive nor dead when she was away. Of course, some women returned, but some babies were lost. A child would come back into the country years later no longer speaking Inuktitut, and no one would know who the parents were, or even which part of the Arctic he came from. 'Anyone short a little boy?' "

Houston rarely had to settle domestic disputes. No physical abuse occurred in his territory during the entire fourteen years he was in the Arctic. The most painful thing he ever had to do was to call in a judge and court and see a good friend banished for ninety days for statutory rape. (The girl had been willing, but her parents had not been consulted.) There was a harrowing scene at the government flagpole when the guilty party was sent away. Houston's wife went out to bid him goodbye and cry, as did the Civil Administrator, who cried again when he told me about it, thirty years later. By the time the man returned from banishment, which had left him free to hunt with friends three hundred miles away, the girl had been married off. Houston was eventually forgiven, but not for a long time.

IN 1957, Houston began to set up a crafts center in an office he had built of packing boxes, with the help of Oshaweetok, whom the Eskimos of West Baffin Island consider their finest carver. The Houstons had met him when they crossed Baffin Island the first time, and he and Houston became closest friends. They hunted together, worked together, and played together; their children were the same age. Oshaweetok told Houston what was possible for carvers and what wasn't. He knew where the stone was and how to tell whether it was good, and who the reliable men were. When Houston first traded for carvings at Cape Dorset, he would get both good and bad, and the problem was what to do with the clunkers. His solution was to load them on a handsled, take off in the dark of night through the barrier ice and out onto the main ice, where he knew there was a tide crack, and drop a hundred or so carvings down the crack; he paid for them by raising the prices of the good ones. (Once, after a lecture Houston gave in New York, a man in the audience who was a scuba diver asked, "Would you show me on the map about where this crack was?") From the little packing-box office grew the West Baffin Eskimo Coöperative.

One night, Houston was drawing at his desk and noticed Oshaweetok examining the design on a package of Player's cigarettes—a sailor's head with a rakish hat. Oshaweetok arranged packs of cigarettes on the desk like a checkerboard, and said, "Does somebody take a brush and draw that same sailor's head time after time?" It suddenly hit Houston that Eskimos, for all their artistic talents, had no way of reproducing their art. He had a walrus

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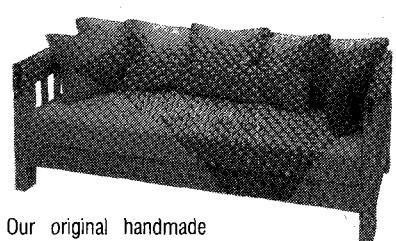

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tusk that Oshaweetok had incised. He got some ink, dipped his fingers into it, rubbed them over the surface of the tusk, took a piece of toilet paper and laid it on top of the ink, rubbed his hand over the paper, and took off a rather blurry impression. He then tried onionskin paper, and the impression was better. Next, he tried a flat piece of stone that an Eskimo had carved like a woodblock, and got quite a good impression. They experimented with lampblack from seal-oil lamps, and they also mixed dried red ochre, but the results were messy. Houston immediately asked the government to send in the necessary supplies: the correct ink, rollers, and papers. By this time, there was starting to be some air activity around Cape Dorset, and the community was less dependent on the annual visit of the icebreaker.

The first prints, sent out to Stratford, Ontario, were fairly good, but Houston saw his deficiencies as a printmaker. He had accumulated a lot of leave, and in the autumn of 1958 he put in for it. "I brought out a ton of my own drawings, had an exhibition in Ottawa, sold everything, and bought a ticket to Tokyo. I then consulted the Japanese Ambassador. I was told that when I got to Japan, after checking in with the Canadian Embassy I should go to the Japanese Cultural Society in Tokyo. So I did, and, about a million cups of tea later, they brought in a famous woodblock teacher, Unichi Hiratsuka, who was considered a national treasure. Hiratsuka agreed to teach me six nights a week; his daughter did the interpreting. I lived with the man who later became the president of Waseda University; he had been a nobleman before the war. He had a wonderful wife and children, and I lived in the Japanese way—little cold candied fish and rice for breakfast. They had a house in the country, too, and stacks of kimonos—every trapping—but the style was to look intellectual, not ducal. I had a documentary film with me that we had made about the Eskimos, but I'd been warned not to show it to the Japanese, lest they be deeply offended by any implied comparison. I did show it at the Canadian Embassy, and there were two or three Japanese in the audience who loved it and asked if I'd show it again, for some of their friends. The next hurdle was the Lord High Chief of Protocol, then the Royal Princess, with her entourage, and, finally, the Emperor. Well, then, talk about friends!"

When Houston returned to Cape Dorset, six months later, he started a studio, and the Eskimos began to make prints. He had brought all kinds of Japanese tools, made of soft steel, which is quick-sharpening; the Eskimos soon discarded them in favor of file steel, sharpened and used like a chisel. "They swiftly converted the Japanese system to their own, Eskimo system, but this seemed no big deal to them, really. The Eskimos are an inventive bunch. They could now do anything they wanted." Houston helped six or eight people, all men, although there are now women who make prints. He taught them printmaking and how to keep the paper clean. Fingerprints were a big problem, but he finally got the artists to put a paper cutout over the stone block. At first, the artists would ask permission to go hunting. Houston would say, "Don't ask me, this is your coöperative," so they would all go hunting, returning at six P.M. They would eat a little something, sleep for about three hours, then come back and make some more prints. Houston encouraged them to hunt on good days and make prints on bad days.

Houston helped market the prints as he had the carvings, and also forced the use of money in the Arctic. Previously, the Eskimos were shown brass tokens, which were laid out on the counter of the H.B.C. store to represent the value of the skins they brought in. Then these were traded for flour, needles, and other necessities—an arrangement that led to distrust, because the Eskimos were given no record of any transaction. Some carvers were starting to make five and ten thousand dollars a year. (A few of them now make as much as a hundred thousand dollars a year.) Houston and Oshaweetok took four seal skins, worth eight dollars each, to trade with Big Red Pedersen, the manager of the H.B.C., and said they wanted cash for them. Pedersen had no cash, so Houston asked him to radio Winnipeg and remind them that money, not brass tokens, was legal tender in Canada. Winnipeg said O.K., and sent five thousand dollars in small denominations on the next ship. Teaching the Eskimos about money was not quite so simple. After giving an illustrated lecture on equivalency—two white fox equal one print equals thirty dollars—he came in the next day to find that the Eskimos had hung up a huge drawing of a dollar bill, in line with an Eskimo belief that bigger is better. Houston's binoculars and forty-dollar fishing rod were much admired by the Eskimos, and he told them that if they earned money he would get some catalogues and help them do the ordering. They thought this was a great idea, and Houston acted as a sort of one-man coöperative until an elder came around one day and said that what they would *really* like would be their own store, like the H.B.C.—they would buy it with the money they earned from art. Houston said that it wouldn't be easy to find someone to run it, but the elder said he knew someone who would—Big Red Pedersen. To the surprise of both Houston and the H.B.C., Pedersen accepted their offer. The H.B.C. was not pleased: managers were hard to replace. Houston helped the Eskimos build a store, and Big Red, whose real name is Asger Pedersen (now he's the Honourable Asger Pedersen; he became Speaker of the Legislative Assembly for the Northwest Territories in 1987), went south to buy merchandise. In 1959, they held a dance to set the floor, and Pedersen began training a couple of Eskimo clerks. Alma got a small bakery going in one of the government cottages, and she and some of the Eskimo women made bannocks (flour and seal fat or lard, baking powder, and raisins), which could be taken along on the trail. There was one man who was an excellent fisherman, so they gave him a gill net, paid him, and sold the fish at cost. By this time, the government was starting to offer housing—the 512, a clapboard house five hundred and twelve feet square, which Houston had had the Eskimos design. Basically, it was a glorified snowhouse with beds, cupboards, a linoleum floor, and a stove. Cape Dorset was on its way to becoming urbanized.

BACK in June of 1956, the Houstons' second son, Sam, was born, in Ottawa. When Houston went out

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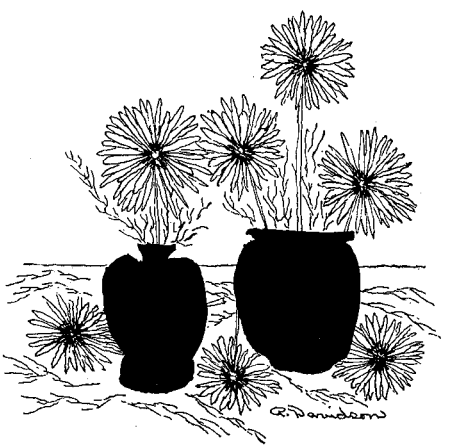
to see Alma and the baby, she was suffering from what was diagnosed as postpartum depression. Mrs. Bardon, Alma's mother, had moved in with Alma and the children, and Houston returned to the Arctic with the understanding that his wife and children were to follow in a couple of months. Soon after his return he had a message from the government that Alma had had a nervous breakdown and was unable to come into the Arctic. He went out to see her again, and she told him that he should go back, that maybe things would get better and she would be able to join him. About a year later, she did, and for the next few years she and the children came in and out of the Arctic several times, but the marriage never quite got back on its feet. She and Houston were divorced in 1967, and Houston is clearly still saddened by whatever part he may have played in the erosion of what was once a sublimely happy marriage. In 1965, in Ottawa, Alma Houston started a wholesale marketing organization for Eskimo art called Canadian Arctic Producers. She now lives in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia, and owns and runs a gallery there for Eskimo and Nova Scotia folk art. Son John is a co-owner of the gallery, but he is increasingly involved in the film business, particularly with films having to do with the Arctic, to which he brings an expertise in Eskimo matters. (Besides having been brought up in the hood, he managed a co-op at Pangnirtung, on the east coast of Baffin Island, for four years.) Sam is married and lives in Aspen, where he and his wife deal in real estate, with notable success.

In the beginning, Alma taught their sons at home, using the Calvert School method, but finally the Houstons decided that the children should go "outside" to school. "As much as possible, they were little Eskimos," Houston told me. "They wouldn't speak English, and they were going bushy on us. Once, when the Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs was visiting, John and Sam ran out and returned with five or six little boys, whom John was charging a .22 bullet apiece to come in and see the big *kadluna*—the big white man. They considered themselves *inook*, not *kadlunait*." The result was that in 1961 Alma, her mother, and the children spent a year in England, where the boys attended a proper British school, in St. Albans. John remembers hiding with Sam when it was time to leave Cape Dorset.

The year went well. While his family was in England, Houston went to Russia for three months. When I questioned him about it, he replied by asking me if I'd ever heard of the D.S.I. I hadn't, and he told me that it was the Directorate of Security and Intelligence, the Canadian equivalent of the F.B.I. He went on to say, "I wanted to do a cultural comparison between the Russian and Canadian Eskimos, and I think originally that's why I was asked, but I never got to the Russian Arctic. The whole experience was an ordeal. I managed to stay out of trouble, but I was fearful." That's all he would say about his time in Russia.

IN the summer of 1959, Arthur A. Houghton, Jr., who was then the president of Steuben Glass, had descended on Cape Dorset with a party of eight, inspired by a lecture he had heard at the Union Club. They were the first tourists to go into that part of the Canadian Arctic (Houghton has hunting license No. 1 to shoot seal in the Arctic), and they arrived prepared: food for two weeks, a footlocker full of medicine and surgical instruments, a doctor, .22 rifles, rods, and all the wrong clothes. (Abercrombie & Fitch had apparently never outfitted anyone for the Arctic before, and included red drop-seat underwear in the gear.) Houghton was allowed to bring in liquor in five-gallon jerry cans, provided he didn't give a drop to any Eskimo. Houston had received word of the group's impending arrival, and he and his merry men had erected small tents, which they lashed down with rocks, and also one communal tent. Fortunately, he had had some Eskimo women run up boots, pants, and parkas for the group. He and Oshaweetok met



the sea plane. They all seal-hunted or fished nearly every day, and there was plenty of time to sit around chewing the fat and slapping mosquitoes. The Houghton group tried to teach the Eskimos how to play soccer, and left them their seal meat, which, as it turned out, helped them through the following difficult winter. Houghton, recognizing Houston's ability to draw, and captured by his imagination, offered him a job at Steuben any time, while freely acknowledging that he wouldn't be able to stand Manhattan.

Houston had now been in the Arctic for more than ten years. He was pushing forty and didn't wish to become an old man there, but he had just started the West Baffin Eskimo Co-op. He had told the Eskimos that he didn't want them to have a civil servant over them —they should hire someone to work for them, he said—and that he would stay three years to be sure the co-op got going. The Eskimos reported that there was a good man at the weather station at Clyde River, who was starting to speak the language and would sometimes come over to their igloos. ("Here's what boring is," Houston says. "It was so boring at the weather station that the men stationed there had sleeping contests.") The man, Terrance Ryan, had graduated from the Ontario College of Art, Houston's alma mater, and Houston told Ryan he was welcome to live in their house for a year. Ryan resigned from the weather station a year later, and came to Cape Dorset. At first, he got only room and board, but then there were a couple of successful sales of Eskimo art, and all of a sudden the co-op went from zero to ninety thousand dollars. Ryan got a small salary out of it.

In 1961, Houghton repeated his offer to Houston, suggesting that he at least come down and try it. Alma was still in England with the children when Houston went to New York. "I went because it seemed like a challenge; I wasn't sure I could do it," he says. "The co-op was going fine, my marriage wasn't. When I left, all the Eskimos at the camp gathered around the aircraft. Only the oldest, most important person speaks. Kiakshuk approached, shook my hand, and handed me a battered paper bag. To my astonishment, the bag weighed almost nothing. In it were a lot of crumpled one- and two-dollar bills. Kiakshuk explained that since I was so interested

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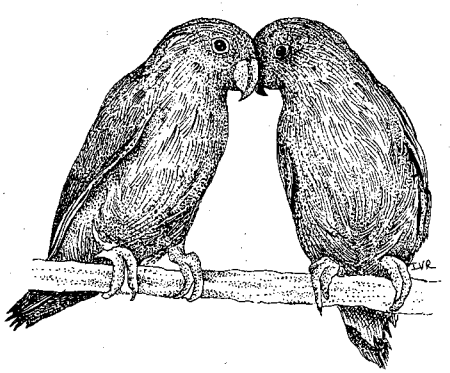
in money they were giving me some."

Houston arrived in New York in late May of 1962. The first shock was the heat, and the second was Arthur Houghton's suggestion that he buy two dinner jackets and keep one in his office. He was launched on a new social circuit, and noticed immediately that he had nothing to say to anyone. "The conversation was the New York *Times*, theatre, gossip, politics, books. I hadn't a clue to what they were talking about. Then someone would ask, 'And what do you do, Mr. Houston?' And I'd say, 'Well, I just came down from the Arctic.' Then someone would say, 'Do Eskimos still live in igloos?' So I'd start to tell them how things were in the Arctic, and watch my audience. If a woman at dinner began to square up the silver, I'd shut up, but mostly they didn't fiddle—they were interested. I went out to dinner every night."

Houghton says that Houston is both the most prolific and the most successful designer that Steuben has ever had. The two men would talk about designs on Friday, and Houston would come in with forty-five ideas on Monday. His specialty is Major Ornamentals—sculptures that combine crystal and precious metals. ("Excalibur," "Trout and Fly," and "Arctic Fisherman" are the most popular.) "I knew damn-all at first," he says. "I'd make some drawings, then go to Corning and stand around on the blowing-room floor and see what they were doing. It was on-the-job training. Management suggested I start on the night shift, when nobody would be in the visitors' gallery to watch me. That first night, I found glassworkers cooking venison in the glory hole—an Eskimo thing if ever I saw one. A glassmaker had shot a deer nearby; there's good hunting around Corning." Another thing that endeared the men on the floor to him was that the shop made glass urinals for any fellow-workers who were in the hospital. Steuben gave Houston a gaffer and a shop. On the floor is obviously where he loves to be, and he gets excited when he talks about it. "I have no mechanical ability—I can't fix anything. I can barely mow the lawn. When you're on the floor, to think and move fast is everything, and to do it with absolute accuracy. Steuben glass is clear as gin—we wouldn't dream of using color. If you see a deer in the forest, it may stand unmoving for twenty-two seconds. That's the amount of time I have to move in—you have to get it at just the right moment. The men on the floor would know this as the moment of truth. I do lots of drawings in advance, but sometimes I'll see something that looks to me like part of a bird, or an animal on the end of the blowing iron. Harry Phillips, the gaffer, might say, 'I don't see it,' so I'll draw with chalk or eraser pencil on the concrete floor. Then Harry will say, 'Let's make it.' Maybe we want forty-five seconds of glass. The servitor and the stick-up boy get it from a steadily running stream of molten glass. Then we start to work: this is the Queen of Battle. Sometimes you get it the first time and then can't get it again, even trying twenty-five times. You've got this white-hot glob of crystal hanging there, all alive and moving—you have to make up your mind in a few seconds. When I'm trying to get a bird to fly or a fish to jump, that's what I find thrilling. You miss lots of times, but when you get it, wow!" Houston and Harry once tried to make a seraphim (six wings: the highest order of angel) sixteen inches high. They had a huge audience. They got five wings on before the whole thing fell into the glory hole. "The coefficients are so different—cold at the back near the iron, and too hot up at the head. Everyone was brokenhearted—the audience as well as us. We largely free-form pieces, the way they did in the eighteenth century. What doesn't suit is thrown away. We might make twelve, keep three, then throw two away after we've seen them cold." Houston takes the remaining model back to New York.

Steuben kept a light rein on Houston. He went to Canada several times a year, and once or twice a year he went back to the Arctic. He is a member of the Canadian Guild of Crafts Quebec (formerly part of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild), and was at one time chairman of the Canadian Eskimo Arts Council, which he had formed, in 1962, because he wanted expert judgment on the art that was coming south. "What I'm proudest of in the last forty years is the art," he says. "Because of dumb luck, I tripped over the stone carvings and prints. Not one cent was invested in the carver. Good paper cost less than a dollar, shipping weight was negligible. A whole year's work took up very little space. The stone went out on the icebreakers, which otherwise went out empty. People give me a lot of credit—a lot of credit I don't deserve—but it's sort of a thrill to feel you might be helping someone, whether it's an old lady to cross the street or a culture to survive. I predicted that the Eskimos would be making a million dollars a year; they've often made ten million annually. I had the government behind me from the Prime Minister on down. They'd ask me what I thought should be done, and I'd tell them. We had a first-rate board, the brightest people in the country, and a huge reservoir of good will." Pitseolak, a woman artist, has written: "I think Saomik was the first man to help the Eskimos. Ever since he came, the Eskimo people have been able to find work. Here in Cape Dorset they call him 'The Man.' "



HOUSTON began doing some writing in 1964. The idea had first crossed his mind when he saw that no one was squaring up the silver during his tales of the North. He excels at storytelling, a talent he honed in the Arctic, often whipping out pad and pencil to illustrate a point. Children follow him around as if he were the Pied Piper, hanging not only on his every word but on him. Adults who are talking to other people tend to eavesdrop. One can be absorbed in conversation, and hear Houston's voice across the table: "No, that's not how it works. An Eskimo has to *ask* his wife if she wants to have sex with another hunter." Out goes the flap ear. "If she's agreeable, she says, 'It's only up to you.' If she's not agreeable, she keeps on sewing and doesn't answer. The husband would never insist that

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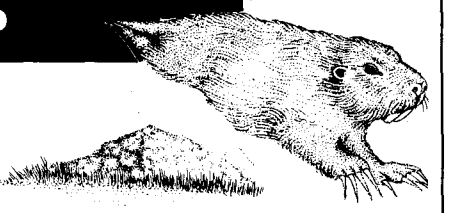

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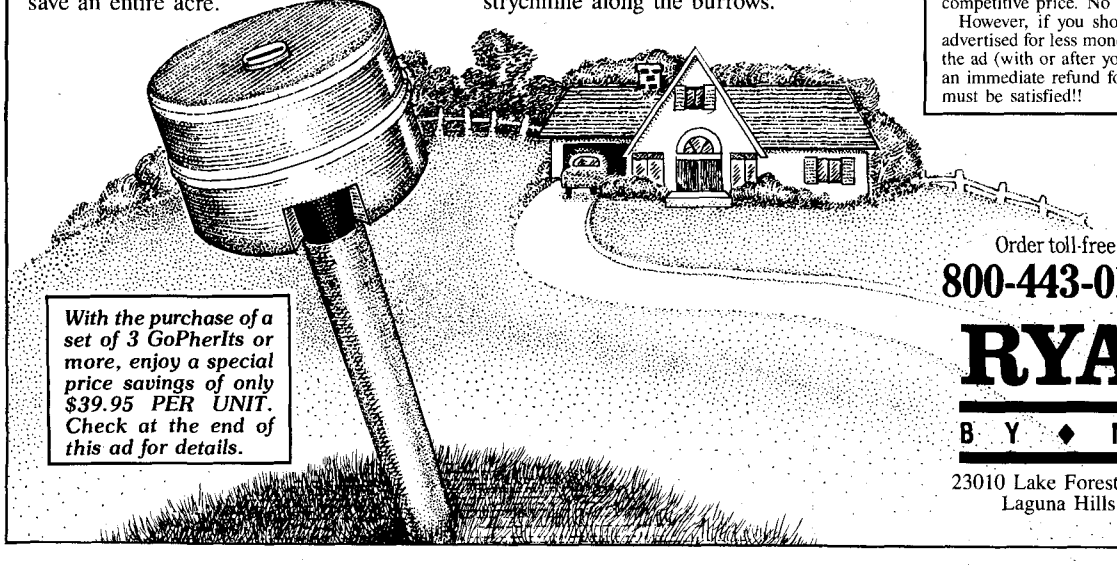

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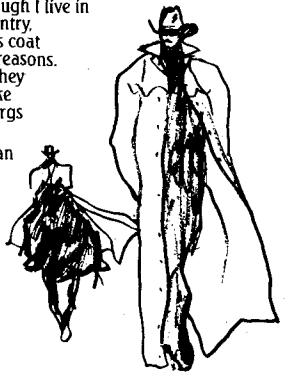

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his wife sleep with a visitor. If he did, his wife might take a needle to bed with her and jab the amorous husband." Or: "We couldn't stay on the plane, because the heater wasn't working. By way of amenities, we had a primus stove, a couple of gallons of gas, a loaf of bread, a bottle of rum, four chocolate bars, and chewing gum—for six men, an Eskimo woman, and her baby. The baby had a wonderful time, laughing away. We were rescued, on the fifth day, because the radio operator wanted to learn to build an igloo and I told him he'd have to learn to make a straight wall first, then I'd teach him how to curve the blocks. By the third day, we'd finished an eighteen-foot wall, forty inches high. The search plane never saw the flares or the aircraft; what it did see was a man-built straight line gleaming in the sun." On one occasion, he recounted an Eskimo legend in the presence of an editor of children's books, Margaret K. McElderry, and she suggested that he write a book. "I told her that I'd illustrate it but I couldn't write it. She said to write it as best I could and she'd straighten it out. So I wrote 'Tikta'liktak' over the weekend, and the next weekend I did the illustrations. It won all kinds of prizes, and went into dozens of editions and many languages. So I said to myself, 'What could be easier than this?' Well, 'Ghost Fox' took me five years."

His books are adventure stories, based on myths and legends, as well as on actual events. The sensibility is that of the native, be he Eskimo or Indian. The prose is simple and direct, sprinkled with epic words: "noble," "brave," "strong," "bold," "vast," "mighty," "proud." They do not ring false, because of the conviction in the author's voice. Houston thinks of himself not as a writer but as a storyteller. "I'm sort of uneducated," he says. "I write so that an Eskimo or an Indian who knows some English can read my books. I want my books to be understandable to the Eskimos and the Haidas—to the mass of people." The lore is prodigious, and precise to the last needle stitch. He enjoys the research enormously. First, he makes drawings of his characters and what he plans to write about. "When I start a novel, I say, 'The barn is here, the house is there, with a hundred and twenty-eight feet between.' " He once spent a night in a tree and, another time, waded through a beaver swamp so that he could write from personal experience. When he writes about what an Eskimo is doing, he's done it all. Houston succeeds as well as any white man ever has at putting himself inside the minds and hearts of so-called primitive people, and is considered by both whites and natives to have pulled off this nearly impossible feat better than anyone else.

In 1971, Houston got a hundred thousand dollars for "The White Dawn," and considerably more when the movie rights were sold. In 1967, he had married Alice Watson, an assistant editor in the book division of the American Heritage Publishing Company. With the proceeds from "The White Dawn," the Houstons bought a farm in a remote part of Rhode Island and moved up there. He continued to draw, write, design, and lecture; she typed his manuscripts and cooked, and together they tended a flock of sheep. They were absent so much of the time that the farm eventually proved too impractical, and they moved to Stonington in 1983.

What comes through in Houston's written and oral tales is not only his understanding of Eskimos but his deep admiration and love for them. They had a profound effect on him. "I am the beneficiary of my association with Eskimos. They allowed me into their life, but they didn't expect me to allow them fully into ours. They taught me to view life in a way I had not thought about it before. They taught me about kindness, about generosity from one human being to another—a generosity of a kind I couldn't believe. An Eskimo would share his last goose egg with you when food was scarce. And Eskimos are very loving. Suppose I'm sitting on an igloo bench, drawing, and two hunters come in. They'd sit one on either side of me, and their wives would lean from behind. The two guys would put their arms around you and give you a little hug, the children trying to climb on you." That this tends to happen to Houston in New York, Stonington, Toronto, and anywhere else he might be is beside the point. "There was plenty of laughing, singing, and dancing, and, above all, an abundance of ingenuity and skills.

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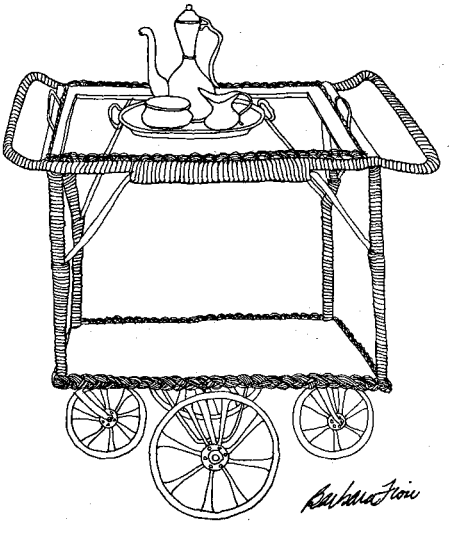
They have a cheerful, fatalistic view of life and death. One of their songs goes, 'There is one great thing, the only thing, to live to see the great day dawning.' Death isn't frightening, it's mysterious. *Iyonamut* means 'It can't be helped, there's no changing it.' If your father died, an Eskimo would come and weep with you and say '*Iyonamut*.' If it could have been helped, that's different; an Eskimo would say '*Nelunuktvingalook*'—'That's a difficulty for me.' When Oshaweetok's wife died, four years ago, we sent John, who is his godson, to say '*Iyonamut*.' Most Eskimos are reluctant to commit themselves, to put forth an opinion. They take their cue from you. If an Eskimo meets someone who doesn't seem worthwhile, he says, 'What a waste of time!' If an Eskimo is angry, he doesn't stay to fight, he slides out of your life. They try to keep gossip kindly, they make only very subtle digs, because they have to rely on each other. Eskimo stories are based on truth as well as myth. It is such a small society that in order to prevent feuds it has been necessary to mythicize true events by turning human beings into animals, say, before handing the story down."

ACCORDING to Alice Houston, the Houstons might well have a sampler over the mantelpiece reading:

> Let man wear the fell of the lion,
> woman the fleece of the sheep.

These lines of William Blake's are basic to her husband's modus vivendi. In the Houston household, the man brings home the bacon and, whenever possible, the fish, game, and venison; the woman does everything else except chew the boots. Houston around the house is a feminist joke. ("Now, let me see. Where do you think she keeps the silver?") He takes things as they come, however; there is no grousing. He is not one to fuss about what he eats or where he sleeps. If he's asked how he manages when his wife is away, he may say, "Oh, I eat hamburgers, Rice Krispies, any old thing, throwing the bones in the corner, laughing and singing," but in fact he eats tuna fish out of the can (usually standing at the counter), fortified with tea and toast, his two culinary accomplishments. He seems not to carry around the bag of worries that the rest of us do. He doesn't read the newspapers (but does watch television news while drawing constantly), and he doesn't open his bank statements. When it comes to fears, he travels light. He doesn't worry about things over which he has no control, and these include illness and death. Five years ago, he got shingles, and he still has them. The only outward sign of the pain is that he sometimes sits holding his side, like Napoleon. In 1984, he had a mitral-valve repair, and that's the end of any conversation about it. He hates anything to do with medical matters, and feels that one should rise above one's physical infirmities. He's not sure whether this is the Scotch Presbyterian influence or the Eskimo influence. One has the feeling that if he lost everything—house, money, family wiped out by an act of God—he would weep, say "*Iyonamut*," rig up a little packing-box house, eat tuna fish out of the can, and get on with it.

Any fears he has are reserved for the Eskimos and the Indians. "If you ever meet a white man or woman who tells you they have a solution to the Eskimo or Indian problems in North America, tell them to go away," he says. He considers that in the nineteen-fifties relations between whites and Indians and Eskimos in Canada were excellent. "So then all of a sudden in the sixties some young guys—failed lawyers and the like, young guys on the run from war—come along and decide to get in the act and start ferment. This Inuit business was all got going by young whites who wanted to become politically prominent in the Eskimo world. Eskimos never got into the discussion. It was started by young Turks who wanted a show of power: 'At least we can make the whites stop calling these people Eskimos.' There's this perfect word, 'Eskimo,' an Indian word believed, arguably, to mean 'eater of raw meat' and certainly not an insult—they still call their co-op the West Baffin Eskimo Co-op. When we say 'Inuit,' we usually use it incorrectly. It means 'the people.' White asses didn't do any better by the Indians. A lot of the hippies who arrived in the Queen Charlottes turned into environmentalists. They appeal to the Haidas' pride—it all sounds good—and speak through the Indians to the government. The Indians have a saying: 'As the tide goes out, the table is set.' The Northwest Coast Indians lived off the country and the sea. They cut down trees and built their lodges; there was also copper and gold mining. Around 1961, MacMillan Bloedel, a Canadian logging company, came along, and hired a lot of these guys. Then the environmentalists decided to blow the whistle, and all hell broke loose. With growing help from the Haidas, together they've managed to turn all of the southern Charlottes into one vast provincial tourist park, with no further logging or mining permitted. This is presented as returning the land to the Indians. The problem is that a good many Indian and non-Indian families there have relied on logging for their living. The trees there are largely second growth anyway, not virgin forest. And not only is the forest no longer virgin but, because of the islands' climate, trees grow at a rapid rate. It's an almost perfect environment: all that's necessary is controlled cutting and harvesting, and careful reforestation. So, once again, the Haidas are screwed. The less people know about the subject, the more they're apt to pile into the Eskimos and the Indians. 'They get some money and spend it all on booze!'—that kind of thing."



Houston is not as worried about alcohol as he is about the school system in the Arctic. "On the one hand, we're teaching a whole people to deculturate themselves and become like us. On the other, we're asking them to fight us off culturally, to maintain their Eskimoness. I started messing things up back in 1952 when I told them my wife was going out with me to teach their children the three R's. First, there were five students, then eight, and now we've come to this impasse. At that moment, the Eskimos took on this new philosophy: we'll give our children to the teacher and see what happens. But

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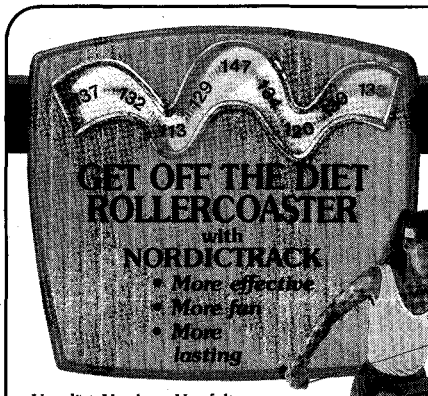

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the Eskimos also took the view that they no longer had to control their kids: teacher is going to take care of them, and teach them to be white children, so we'll leave the rearing and education of our children to the schools. That was the thinking in the fifties, anyway. You had a roomful of kids, with the teacher speaking English only, the children waiting for a cup of cocoa. They would do some lovely drawings, and there'd be a physical-culture period, with an exercise, say, where they jump up and down, flapping their arms and shouting, 'One, two, three! Hello! Goodbye!' From an Eskimo point of view, this is most unseemly conduct—mindless and crazy—and the parents would say to themselves, 'If that's the way you're supposed to act, we'd better keep out of this.' So children have drifted further and further away from their parents. I suppose it was inevitable."

In the fall of 1986, at the Canada Council's behest, Houston went all around Baffin Island visiting the schools and talking with the people—both Eskimos and whites. Because of the limitations of time, this turned out to be more of a good-will tour than a fact-finding mission. The atmosphere was charged with high spirits and a marked absence of purpose, which did nothing to allay his fears. "The Eskimos get a little pissed off with me, because I said it's partly their fault that things get out of hand. Thirty-five years ago, in the Eastern Arctic, they came in off the land and let their kids go to school. Then I hear from them that it isn't working well at all. The teachers say it's the damn families' fault, that they will no longer take responsibility for the behavior of their kids. Until the mid-seventies, the kids were taught entirely in English. Now at least an attempt is being made to teach the youngest grades in Inuktitut, but what worries me is that a great oral tradition was allowed to disappear, with nothing to replace it. A grandmother felt that it was no longer necessary to tell the story of how an Inuit girl turned into the goddess who controls the sea. We sons of bitches are giving them a *kadluna* education, then dropping them. Only a handful of Eskimos have reached university level. We're helping to jerk people out of an incredibly delicate educational system that they had devised for themselves over the centuries, and shove them into

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what? Does anyone propose to hire that girl as a secretary in Montreal, or have that young man run a computer in Toronto? They leave school by about the eighth grade, and meanwhile they've missed going out with their fathers and learning how to hunt, or learning from their mothers how to live off the land. All because of our monkeying around—and some might say that Houston monkeyed around more than anyone. These people are not museum pieces; modern life is moving around them. We have to accept that their way of life will go, that they'll have to take on our ways. We're wiping out some of the last remaining people who really understand life, and when I level any accusations like that I level them directly at myself. I was busy doing it."

For about five years, in the mid-seventies, Eskimo children were not required to go to school. The government became alarmed when Houston explained what happened when a people formerly out on the land had to gather around the school so that the children could attend. (Now teachers sometimes travel with the students to the spring hunting camps.) "It would be O.K. if there had been big plans for their future, but there were no such plans. I'm hoping for a wonderful solution to come to me. I believe that the first thing that must happen is an increased use of Eskimo teachers—there are very few now—but what I want to do has not yet been invented. My hope is that they'll reclaim and remake their own world."

IN the Queen Charlottes, life isn't quite as warm and fuzzy as it was in the Arctic. Whereas it took about ten minutes to get to know the Eskimos, Houston says, it took about ten years to get to know the Haidas. "The Haidas live mainly in the Queen Charlottes—there are a few in southern Alaska. To be with them is like being with the kings of the world. A Haida noble was equal to the Duke of Bedford. The noblewomen were described as 'women-whose-feet-never-touch-the-ground.' In the Haida world, everything is feasting and carving; their skill in art is unsurpassed." In 1968, Houston was asked by the Minister of Indian and Northern Affairs to do a survey of British Columbia to determine whether there was a potential for the rebirth of Indian art. He concluded that there was a tremendous potential, but that it would have to be handled in a different way. "Many Indians have had two hundred years of conflict with the white man, and are suspicious, with good reason, of any dealings with him. They prefer to trade directly with the dealer or, better still, with the collector, and eliminate any middleman. They are gift-giving people, always trying to be one up on you. A potlatch can drain one's resources in the same way a royal progress could. If I give a fishing rod to Teddy, Teddy might give me a carving. Once, I was given a whole library, an abandoned Royal Canadian Air Force library that had been taken over by a Haida man. I don't know how in the world I'm ever going to outdo that."

Houston says that, like the Eskimos, he lives to see the great day dawning, but he doesn't allow much grass to grow under his feet between dawns. When I left him in Tlell, he was working on a new children's book, finishing a screenplay for a movie called "Whiteout," drawing up plans for a tree house he intends to make out of a cedar stump fourteen feet in diameter, fishing, fulminating over the threatened world of the Haidas and the Eskimos, and wondering if he should buy Alice another secondhand stove or a new one. —MARY D. KIERSTEAD

• •

SUMMER 1983

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praised all our given names; begged us to smile . . .
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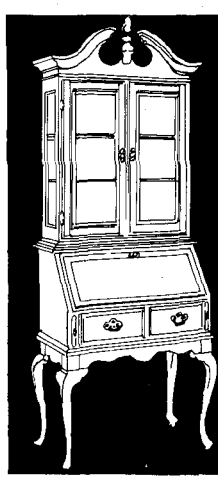

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A REPORTER AT LARGE

SKIRMISH

ON May 10th, a sixteen-day nationwide series of rolling strike actions by Polish workers came to an end as a few hundred Gdansk shipyard employees—the scraggly remnants of a band that at one point had numbered several thousand—abandoned their occupation of the Lenin Shipyard without having achieved any agreement with the government. The strikes, provoked by a ferocious series of food and clothing price increases, had begun on Monday, April 25th, when bus and tram drivers suddenly went out in Bydgoszcz, in central Poland. It hadn't been the local underground Solidarity structures that called that strike but, rather, the head of the local branch of the official transportation union—a union that the authorities had set up as a replacement after disbanding Solidarity during the days of martial law. The authorities, quickly acceding to the transport workers' demands, granted compensating wage increases of sixty-three per cent even before the day was out. The next day, however, the strike spread to the Lenin Steelworks in Nowa Huta, outside Krakow, with four thousand workers dropping their tools. Eight thousand more did so the day after that, and a majority of the more than thirty thousand workers had joined in by the weekend.

Nowa Huta isn't just any factory town. In the forties and early fifties, its Lenin Steelworks was *the* model institution of the newly emergent Workers' Poland, the flagship, as it were, of the Polish Stalinist era's industrial fleet. (It was Nowa Huta in this period which provided the backdrop for much of the action in Andrzej Wajda's 1977 film "Man of Marble.") During this strike, the local underground structures of Solidarity were much more heavily involved than they had been at Bydgoszcz, and here the workers were holding out for more than just pay increases: they were demanding the reinstatement of fired colleagues as well, and on that issue the plant management was refusing to budge. A similar set of demands was made at week's end at the Stalowa Wola Steelworks, a hundred miles away, but that strike was settled in a couple of days, without much more than wage concessions from management. So that on Sunday, May Day, it was principally Nowa Huta that was still out on strike—seemingly isolated and exposed.

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Many Western observers had initially concluded that Solidarity was once again showing brilliant tactical planning in calling these strikes at this time. After all, the regime might well be reluctant to unleash an assault against workers around May Day, the very day on which the regime traditionally pays tribute to them. And then there was the Moscow summit, scheduled for the end of May, which likewise appeared to grant the striking workers room to maneuver. The Polish regime, it was reasoned, wouldn't want to do anything that might embarrass Mikhail Gorbachev at such a sensitive moment.

But the truth was that Solidarity's underground national leadership had not called any of these strikes and really wanted nothing to do with them. As far as most of the national Solidarity leaders were concerned, this was the wrong time for a strike. Conditions might well have been ripening toward a critical moment somewhere down the line, but this was not it, they felt, and some of them weren't even sure that a strike was going to constitute the best course of action when the moment finally came. These strikes seemed to be bubbling up of their own accord. The youngest, least seasoned workers seemed the most eager to strike now, in the name of Solidarity, while the union's national leadership—veterans, men in their late thirties and forties—seemed momentarily paralyzed, unsure how to respond.

On Monday, May 2nd, about a quarter of the work force at the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk went on strike in support of their col-

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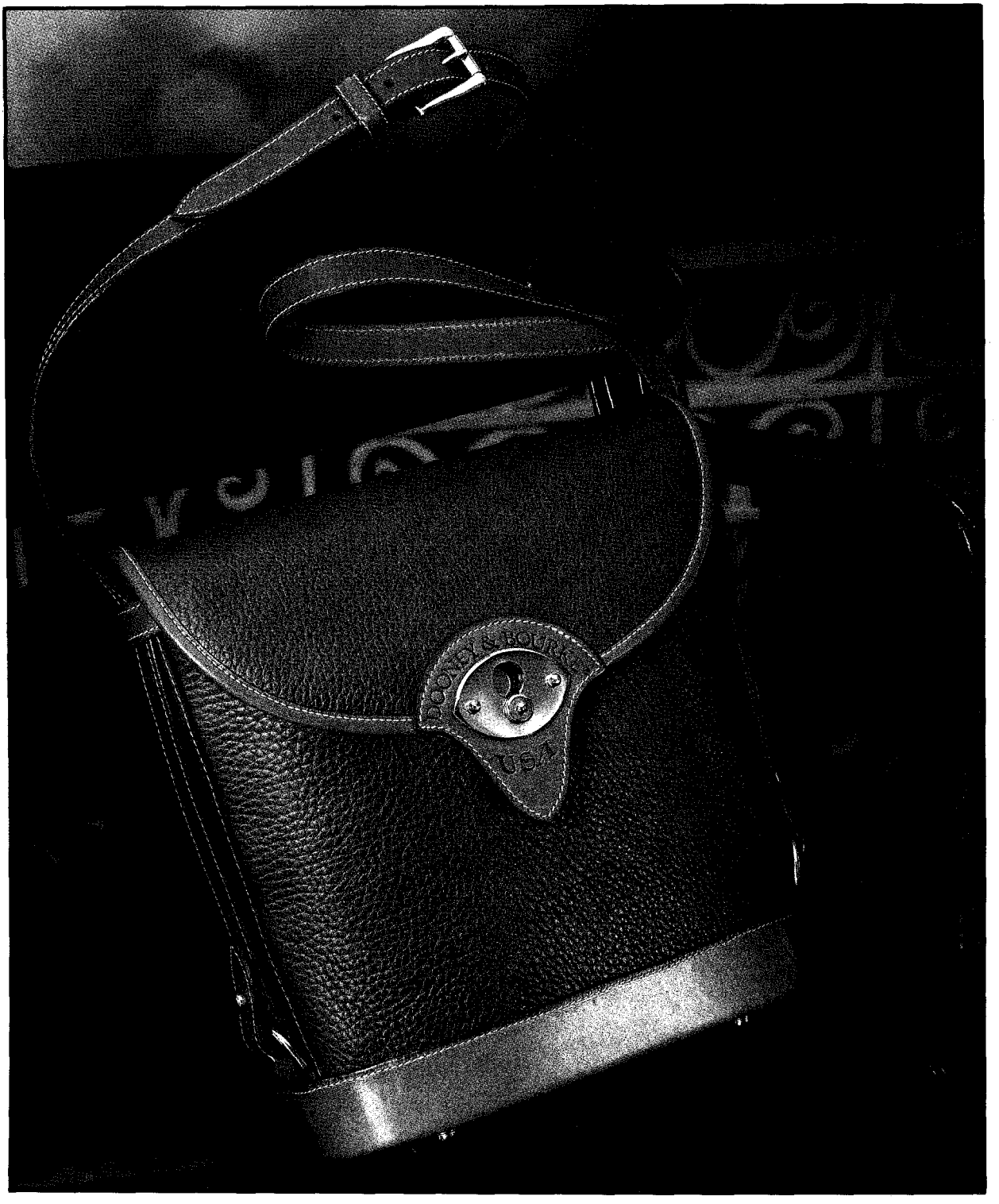
Photographer: Minh



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leagues at the Lenin Steelworks in Nowa Huta. ("What one Lenin started," went the new joke, "two Lenins will now finish off.") This time, a new group of rookies seemed to be taking the lead. And still the national leadership hesitated. The main demand of the workers at the Lenin Shipyard was not wage increases, or even the reinstatement of fired colleagues, but the relegalization of Solidarity itself. It was remarkable that these demands were being pressed by youngsters, who had never had an opportunity to belong to the union. Many of them were still in elementary school in August of 1980, when a seventeen-day strike at the Lenin Shipyard culminated in the registration of Solidarity, the first independent trade union in the Eastern bloc, which persisted as a legal entity for the next sixteen dramatic months—up to the December, 1981, coup that signalled the beginning of a long period of martial law in Poland.

On May 2nd, as this new strike got under way, Lech Walesa, the hero of those earlier days, happened to be out on sick leave. Nevertheless, he rushed over to the shipyard to address his fellow-workers. He told them that though he was with them, he had not himself called the strike; that actually he was neither for nor against it, though he did feel emphatically that some decisive action in support of Nowa Huta was called for; that he wasn't at all sure this was the right time for a strike but that they could count on him, he would be with them. Actually, on those first few nights, he wasn't with them: still on sick leave, he went home each evening, returning the next morning for consultations and further exhortations. And he was not a member of the strike committee.

While Solidarity's national leadership continued to hesitate, the regime now began to display some genuine tactical brilliance of its own. To begin with, it allowed the strike in Gdansk to gather momentum, knowing full well that the Western press, which had initially converged on Nowa Huta to cover the larger and much more significant developments down there, would now hurry north en masse to cover events at the more famous (and more photogenic) shipyard. Meanwhile, in Nowa Huta, the regime, in a fresh gambit, feigned a negotiating effort during Wednesday, May 4th, by calling on the assistance of Church-

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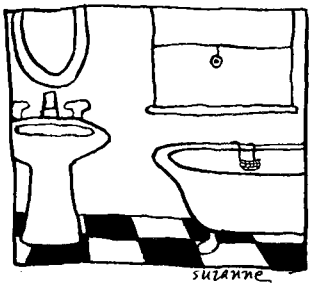
appointed mediators. But very early the next morning the authorities instead sent in their fearsome ZOMO riot police, with instructions to reoccupy the plant, which the ZOMOs proceeded to do with brutal efficiency. Dozens of workers were injured, many seriously, and hardly a single Western reporter or television crew was around to cover the carnage. That same night, the ZOMOs faked a similar operation in Gdansk, refraining from any actual assault; instead, they cordoned off the yard, in what proved to be a progressively more strangulating long-term siege. From this point on, Walesa elected to stay with his co-workers, though their ranks were now diminishing precipitously. By week's end, perhaps only a thousand workers were still striking. Church-appointed mediators were trying to negotiate on their behalf, but the yard's management seemed unwilling to budge on anything beyond the question of wages. Moreover, in a particularly galling move, management announced that come Monday non-striking workers would be required to pick up their paychecks on the other side of town, at the Olivia Sports Arena, which in September of 1981 had been the site of Solidarity's First (and only) National Congress of Delegates. For many of these non-striking workers, already shamed by their own failure of nerve, this would prove a further humiliation.

Over the weekend, Solidarity's still hesitating national leadership apparently concluded that Gdansk could not be permitted to go on dangling like that, pathetic and alone. The Warsaw regional leadership decided to call a sympathy strike at the mammoth Ursus tractor works, outside town, and scheduled it to begin with the first shift on Monday, the ninth. Zbigniew Bujak, the Warsaw region's charismatic leader and a onetime worker at Ursus, visited the plant on Sunday evening to prepare for the next morning's action. However, he was arrested on the spot. In the morning, the strike began on schedule, but, stripped of its leadership and faced with an overpowering police presence, it quickly fizzled. The situation at Ursus was "normalized," as the government put it, by evening.

News of the strike at Ursus had enormously heartened the shipyard workers, and news of its collapse enormously deflated them. Negotiations remained stalemated, with management making a final offer of increased pay, while the workers still insisted on relegalization of Solidarity. The strike was now down to between five hundred and seven hundred holdouts, and the encircling siege was almost fully effective: no more food was getting in, no more notes from families. But on Tuesday, May 10th, the strike committee came up with an inspired gambit of its own. The committee members decided—and, with some difficulty, they persuaded their co-workers to endorse the decision—simply to leave the plant without any agreement: to leave as a body, together, unbroken, declaring the strike not over but merely "suspended for the time being."

AFTERWARD, the mood was hardly one of exaltation. The first time I visited Poland, in 1981, during the heyday of Solidarity, the place *had* seemed exalted—in the throes of an extraordinary passion. Everything had been wide open, full of possibility. This time, however, as I arrived the week after the strikes, the mood in Warsaw was much darker. A feeling of failure hung in the air—defeat, confusion, humiliation. Many of the activists I'd known from earlier trips seemed dispirited—embarrassed, perhaps, over the fiasco at Ursus, humbled by the movement's inability to come to grips with the recent opportunities.



People were busy second-guessing. These strikes, for example, had been too quick in spreading to the major factories. Back in the summer of 1980, wildcat strikes had percolated for six weeks throughout the country before finally reaching Gdansk. The big problem, according to another line of retrograde analysis, was that the miners down south hadn't yet been ready to come out. Many of the national leaders, meanwhile, were blaming themselves. "The problem was a lack of flexibility in our thinking," one of them remarked to me. "All through martial law, we'd been preparing for a general strike, but it never happened. Hence we were unprepared organizationally or psychologically to call for anything now. Besides, for us activists the situation before the strikes was convenient: we were comfortable, we weren't running many risks. It's not so much that a lot of us now have children to watch out for, though there's some of that. Rather, it's our age: we're older, more settled. Partly it was people who failed, and partly it was the structure. We were simply unprepared. For example, no one ever thought through the purely technical aspects of what should be done—whether people should stay at home or go into hiding. Everything was contrived piecemeal. It was hard to require the rank and file to go out on strike if the leadership couldn't even get there. I'm saying this not in anger but in hope—hope that next time we'll do better."

Hope seemed notably absent from the outlook of another of my informants—the no longer quite so young political commentator who publishes in the underground under the well-known pseudonym Dawid Warszawski. While he is sympathetic to the aspirations of the Solidarity leadership, he long ago staked out an independent—and often quite critical—position to one side of it, and in our conversation he put forward a bleak vision. "Things are going to get bad now, and then very bad," he said. "The days of Nice Poland, Wise and Temperate Poland, are over. We are facing violent political disintegration. Over the past several years, the authorities have managed to cripple Solidarity, and this fact has now been confirmed. For many people, there was until the end of April the myth of a central Solidarity leadership with a coherent strategy. But in the crunch the leaders proved unable to make or carry out decisions. Their vaunted underground structures failed to work. Solidarity as an organization is dead, a beautiful corpse perhaps, a martyr to be avenged—but not a living entity. Next time, the young people—and this new generation is more radical, more desperate, more insistent than any we've ever seen—will go it alone.

"You can't imagine how hopeless things are for young people today. Do you know how long a twenty-year-old who applies for housing in Warsaw today, and puts in his down payment, can expect to wait before he'll see his apartment? Over fifty years! I'm not

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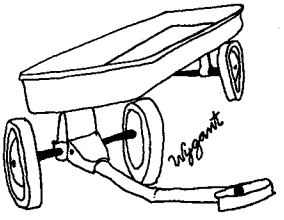
making this up: the current official figure is fifty-six years. I'm thirty-five. When I was twenty, the wait was maybe ten, fifteen years—intolerably long but still imaginable. Nobody who is twenty today and is not a child of the Nomenklatura"—the privileged class of Party bureaucrats, their minions, and their relatives—"or somehow steeped in the Mafia, the black economy, can ever aspire to anything approaching my existence as a thirty-five-year-old, modest though it is. This is a huge generational crisis: an entire generation trapped in overcrowded housing, in spirit-crushing jobs, in utterly polluted environments—with no future, no hope of escape. These young people would like to emigrate—they'd *love* to emigrate—but you've got to have a little nest egg to be able to even contemplate emigrating, and they don't have one and, in current conditions, cannot imagine ever being able to get one.



"I saw a piece of graffiti on a wall in Krakow the other day: 'Emigrate or Shoot.' Now, this should be taken metaphorically—for one thing, nobody has any guns—but it's not 'Emigrate or Negotiate,' or 'Emigrate or Engage in the Pluralist Option.' The authorities have wiped out any viable fantasy of negotiation. I mean, even though I want a Poland free of Communists, short of that I'd like to be able to negotiate with the Communists. But one has to have a mediating structure to be able to negotiate. And in these past few weeks the authorities have systematically destroyed those structures—in terms both of Solidarity and of the Church. Do you think that after what the authorities did in Nowa Huta—faking everybody out with that charade of talking to Church-appointed mediators—those young workers are ever going to trust the Church again? Not even the Church will hold sway with them."

So what will happen?

"Some spontaneous explosion," Warszawski said. "A physical assault on the symbols of authority. Not the strategic or tactical use of strikes or limited violence. Rather, just despair—desperate hopelessness lashing out. And then an enormous and vengeful response, an overkill response, by the authorities. Because, of course, such random violence only plays into their hands. They're *good* at putting down that sort of thing. And in the wake of all that there will be complete and utter hopelessness. Not only will we have lost, but the kind of Poland we might once have been able to negotiate will have been lost, too. Everything will be lost."

THE brute reality of Poland's economic situation wasn't immediately obvious to a visitor this year. If anything, Warsaw, in particular, seemed considerably more prosperous than it had late in 1981, just before martial law, or even late in 1982, in the midst of martial law. Stores were by no means brimming, but they were stocked—especially food and clothing stores. It's true that durable goods—things like refrigerators, television sets, and automobiles—were in short supply. (And there were other nagging exceptions, one of which was toilet paper. A poster at a Wroclaw rally proclaimed, "Socialism is a system for raising toilet paper to the level of a first-class economic problem.") But there weren't the hopeless, sorry lines at every turn which I remembered so well from earlier visits.

This relative bounty, however, was illusory. If the stores were reasonably well stocked, it was because people couldn't afford what was in them. Although there was more beef on display at butcher shops, average meat consumption throughout the country, according to official figures, was down almost fifteen per cent from its already low 1980 level. A positive way of describing this situation is to say that, following a series of jarring price increases—a series that is continuing—most food and clothing items are approaching "market equivalency." That simply means that such things have now become so expensive that price itself, rather than lines or rationing, is serving to control distribution. Another way of putting it is that more and more people are going hungrier and hungrier.

There is still rationing of some items, such as meat, but there are people who are completely outside the rationing system, people who have no trouble paying higher prices to private venders, or even buying directly from farmers, say, at a premium. Average real wages in Poland are down twenty per cent from their 1980 levels—a shocking decline from already meagre levels. (After all, it was the meagreness of those 1980 levels that provoked the original round of Solidarity strikes.) But there are people who have managed to free themselves almost entirely from the downward spiral of the central state economy—and they are doing very well. There are, of course, the apparatchiks and the police—carefully insulated from the wider realities—but there is also a growing class of entrepreneurs. These are individuals who have managed to burrow into small niches in the economy, manufacturing items that the central economy is for some reason failing to provide in sufficient quantity—lampshades, cosmetics, bookcases, toys, computer software, simple tools. And many of these entrepreneurs are becoming zloty millionaires. In addition, anyone who has regular access to hard currency can make a small zloty fortune through the black market in currency exchange. These days, the official rate hovers around four hundred zlotys to the dollar, but the black-market rate is upward of fifteen hundred. The practice of black-market currency exchange is so widely tolerated (the regime *needs* the infusion of hard currency, no matter where it comes from) that one operation even advertises its rate in the daily paper—and, indeed, that rate sets the industry standard.

People with regular access to dollars can eat very well. For example, one afternoon I was with a man whose daughter, in the States, sends him a small monthly stipend. He brought out a basketball-size haunch of prime veal that he'd just bought directly from a farmer, who had delivered it to his downtown office. He'd paid the farmer seventy-two hundred zlotys, a virtual fortune in a country where the average monthly salary is about thirty-five thousand. But seventy-two hundred zlotys is less than five dollars at the black-market rate. For five dollars, he got a slab of meat that might well have cost his daughter fifty back in the

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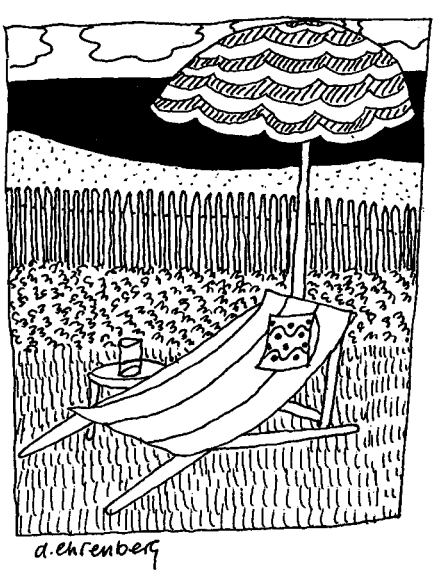
States. I don't get it. Nobody gets it. The Polish economy is universally described as a mystery.

What I do get—what is far from mysterious—is that the past decade has seen a precipitate polarization in the distribution of wealth in Poland. If at first glance Warsaw seems more prosperous today than it did in 1982, this is because part of it is. The effect is almost Latin-American. One afternoon, a Western diplomat described the astonishing array of merchandise available at a sort of high-class local flea market—items ranging from car brakes to VCRs and word processors. "As far as I can make out, this country is divided into three classes," he said. "There are those who can't afford to go West; those who do, and work for a time, bringing back goods they can sell; and those who don't even have to go West—they can just stay put and buy their goods from the second group." An economist I spoke with estimated—although he cautioned that official statistics were extremely tricky—that between six and eight per cent of the non-farm population was now employed in the private sector. Not all these people were zloty millionaires, by any means, but some were, and if you added to their number a sizable segment of the Nomenklatura, the police, the black marketeers, the outright criminals, and so forth you could begin to understand all the fancy Mercedeses with Polish plates pulling up at state-owned hard-currency Pewex shops (I was told several times that Poland has the second-highest concentration of Mercedeses in Europe, after West Germany)—this in a country that is in so many ways an economic basket case. "It's not really surprising," Jan Litynski, a prominent Solidarity theorist, assured me. "This country is in a tremendous ongoing crisis, and in a crisis one can always make a fortune."

To understand the extent of the Polish crisis, a good place to start is with the country's phenomenal debt, which was built up in large part during an insanely freewheeling (and corrupt) governmental spending spree back in the seventies. One afternoon, an economist affiliated with one of the Western embassies laid the figures out for me: "In 1981, Poland's debt was a staggering twenty-six billion dollars. Today, it's 39.2 billion." That's more than a thousand dollars per person in a country where the average wage is about three hundred dollars per year. "But it's not as though during that period the government somehow managed to borrow more dollars for any constructive purposes," he said. "Each year, it has failed to meet the interest payments, and the difference—the shortfall—gets capitalized onto the debt, so that next year, for example, instead of owing thirty-nine billion it will be owing forty billion."

A few days earlier, I had talked with Ryszard Bugaj, a highly respected opposition economist. He spoke of how the huge debt was acting as a terrible drag on any possible recovery, and I asked him for specific instances. "O.K.," he said. "What we desperately need at this point is a way of boosting our exports, so we can begin to pay off the debt and get out from under. But the debt itself sabotages that effort. For example, I don't know if you've noticed, but in Poland we don't have thermostats. If we had thermostats—leaving aside for the moment how much more *comfortable* we might be—we could reap tremendous energy savings: we'd use a lot less coal. We could then export more coal, thereby generating hard currency with which to pay off the debt. But there are certain devices and materials necessary in the manufacture of thermostats which we can't develop domestically and hence would have to import. Because all our spare dollars are already going into trying to pay off the debt, we're unable to procure these simple devices with which we might otherwise be able to pay off the debt all the faster. There are countless such instances."



The Western economist had just described how, even with dubious economies of this sort, the debt was continuing to grow. "That's one of the reasons the government was so eager to get back into the I.M.F.," he continued, "which it finally did in 1986." (Poland had dropped out of the International Monetary Fund in 1950.) "The government is hoping to line up a standby agreement whereby it could get access to tranches of funding to cover the annual shortfall, so that at least the total debt might begin to stabilize. Of course, the I.M.F. insists on what it calls 'conditionality.' It insists that Poland set up targets with regard to inflation, productivity, savings rate, monetary indices, and so forth, and then perform within those targets—in short, that the regime impose some sort of austerity discipline upon the economy."

As this man was talking, I recalled a moment a few weeks earlier, back in the States, when, at the height of the strikes, David Brinkley had a Polish-government spokesman, live from Warsaw, on his Sunday-morning TV show—a man named Wieslaw Gornicki, who delivered a defense of the regime's position vis-à-vis the strikes. Look, Gornicki had in effect said, echoing the complaint of other regime figures: What do you expect from us? Your I.M.F. and World Bank come in here and order us, on behalf of your banks, to institute a series of reforms and to impose a severe austerity plan on the country. They tell us we have to tighten our belts. Everywhere else they've ordered a similar prescription—in Turkey, Brazil, Africa, wherever—the result has been extreme social unrest: strikes, demonstrations, and so on. We're no different. Get off our backs.

In the days immediately following the declaration of martial law, I recalled, the *Wall Street Journal* had noted, "Many U.S. bankers see Soviet-style authoritarianism as their best hope for recovering the $1.3 billion that Poland owes them," and had gone on to quote an unnamed bank official to the effect that "most bankers think authoritarian governments are good because they impose discipline." It seemed to me that Gornicki might have

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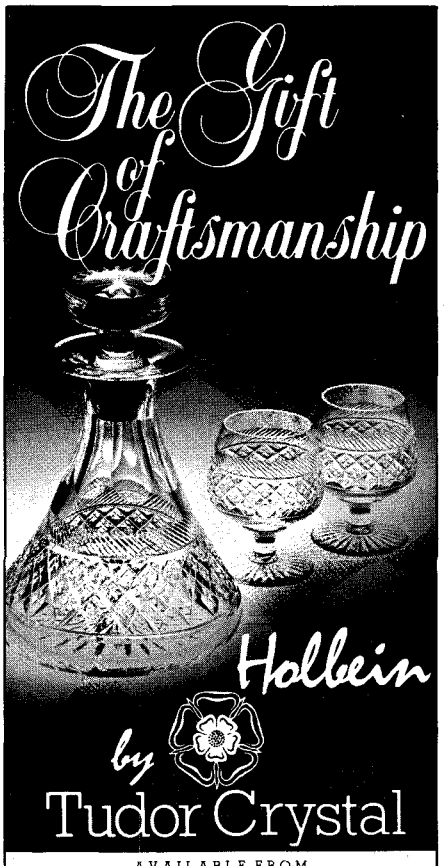

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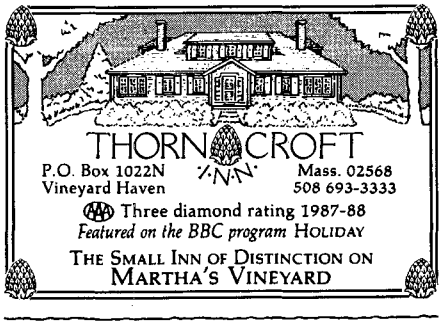

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something of a point; at any rate, I resolved to try it out on some of my Solidarity acquaintances once I got to Poland.

"What nonsense!" a friend who is an editor for one of the leading underground weeklies shot back at me impatiently when I broached the Gornicki comment with her. "Let *them* tighten *their* belts. Let them cut back on their perks and on the police and the military and the bloated bureaucracy. Besides, the point of the austerity is supposed to be that in the meantime you institute reforms. We've got all kinds of austerity but so far no real reforms. This group—which, incidentally, is to all intents and purposes the same group that built up our huge debt in the first place, through their mismanagement and corruption—now they've simply shown that they don't know how to manage austerity, either. They've had six years—most of them with virtually absolute social control—and they haven't improved the economy one bit."

Her point about the lack of reforms was a tricky one, because on paper, at least, General Wojciech Jaruzelski's technocrats had been encouraging all sorts of reforms. For one thing, they had retained much of the Self-Management Law, passed during the Solidarity days—a law that mandated worker participation in the running of the workplace. They had passed a far-reaching series of private-enterprise statutes, designed to encourage entrepreneurial expansion. They had passed an anti-monopoly law, explicitly including state monopolies in its provisions. They had instituted an ambitious joint-venture program, hoping to draw in foreign investors by means of incentives. They had announced various initiatives designed to decentralize planning from Warsaw back to the factory level.

"On paper, they're doing fantastic," my Western economist said. "Actually, a lot of what they're proposing to accomplish is based on the Hungarian model. The difference is that in Hungary people just improvised as they went along, and worried about codifying practice after it had been established, whereas here they have spent tremendous energy drafting these extremely complex legal mechanisms but have been slow to translate them into any sort of reality. Part of the problem is the nature of the entrenched managerial class here. In the United States, for instance, managers beat their heads against the wall of what is not possible, trying to find a way to make it possible. Here, with a thirty-five-year tradition behind them, managers *like* the wall. They're comfortable with it. They don't like taking chances. They prefer to defer to the central bureaucracy, and let it take the risks—let the risks and any adjacent accountabilities get dissipated throughout the system. Furthermore, the central bureaucracy, for its part, keeps exempting key industries from the reforms in an attempt to retain its own turf. So in practice not much happens.

"Last fall, the technocrats put in a new economic czar and announced an ambitious new Second Stage of the Reform. They claimed they were going to target the recalcitrant bureaucracy this time and attempt to stimulate further entrepreneurial activity. Unfortunately, all they seemed to actually pull off was this latest round of price increases. Everything else they just codified."

In Poland these days, it's easy to come upon evidence of the problematic nature of the supposed reforms. (It's hard not to.) According to the Second Stage, for example, it was supposed to be simpler to set up small private enterprises. In practice, however, the bureaucracy seems reluctant to surrender any of its prerogatives, to say nothing of its raison d'être. A recent item in the underground *Biuletyn NAI* described how in order to start up a new company an applicant has to present his local administrative office with eight separate, highly complicated documents, which that office in turn must shuffle around to seven other administrative bureaus for their approval.

The regime has a decidedly ambivalent attitude toward the new enterprises—encouraging them, on the one hand, because it desperately needs whatever infusion they can bring to the economy, and yet, on the other . . . The British weekly *The Economist* recently reported, "Two years ago, Polish newspapers praised CSK, a private firm producing successful computer software in Gdansk. In the next three months the firm was subjected to six different audits by various state bodies, including the local arm of the Anti-Criminal Activity

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Board. In Poland, it does not pay to advertise." Moreover, a tax rate of ninety-five per cent on profits makes long-term investment in capital improvements of the sort that might increase productivity (and hence taxable profits) all but impossible. If a person starts up a business in his apartment, his rent immediately triples. (Thus, one has to be pretty well situated, financially, before one can even consider launching a private business. This is one reason that private enterprise, like emigration, is completely out of reach for the great majority of working Poles.) Is it any wonder that the joint-venture statutes have so far solicited few takers? (Curiously, one of the few American firms to have ventured into Poland recently is Hanna-Barbera, of Flintstones-Jetsons fame, which is apparently finding the extraordinarily well-trained—and cheap—Polish animation talent ideal for generating Saturday-morning kiddie fare.)

As for the self-management statutes, which were supposed to have provoked far more worker participation in the running of state-owned enterprises, here, too, the established bureaucracy has been continually throwing obstacles in the way. When all else fails, the Nomenklatura has recourse to a clause in the law that exempts enterprises on a list of "Institutions Most Important to State Security." That list has been growing relentlessly. According to an item in issue No. 248 of the underground weekly *Tygodnik Mazowsze*, when workers at the state-owned Warsaw Horse Racing Track had the temerity to try to elect their own manager the racetrack was added to the top-security list.

NO, as my editor friend had put it, average Polish workers had seen little reform but a lot of austerity. And the meaning of that strangulating austerity only gradually became clear to me. One afternoon, I was speaking with a strike-committee leader from Nowa Huta named Edward Nowak, who happened to be in Warsaw on business. He explained to me that technically he no longer worked at the steelworks. He had been an engineer there until 1982, and then had been purged for activism (his reinstatement, along with that of several similarly situated colleagues, had been one of the Nowa Huta strikers' demands), whereupon he had been lucky enough to land a job in a private operation. "In 1980, as an engineer, I earned 10,500 zlotys a month, with which I could buy 1,700 kilograms of bread, or 240 kilograms of low-quality sausage, or a washing machine," he told me. "Today, working as the manager of this private enterprise, I earn 60,000 zlotys, with which I can buy 800 kilograms of bread, or 100 kilograms of sausage, or half a washing machine. Incidentally, if I had been able to stay on as an engineer at Nowa Huta, my salary today would be only 40,000 zlotys." Doctors, nurses, and teachers earn less than that.

Nowak's figures highlight two facts about the economy of Poland during the past decade. The first is the disproportion between the increase in prices and the increase in salaries. This disproportion results from the regime's systematic phasing out, in accordance with orthodox I.M.F.-type guidelines, of longtime subsidies on such items as bread and sausage, which used to render them affordable to the majority of Poles. The I.M.F. insists on the primacy of market forces, and it also wants those onetime subsidies converted into hard currency and bled out of the economy altogether in the form of debt repayments. The second fact that Nowak's figures highlight is a rampant generalized inflation. Wages, too, have shot up dramatically during the past decade (though not as dramatically as prices). This is mainly because of the political bankruptcy of the regime—its lack of legitimate authority in the eyes of the majority of the population. Each time the regime has announced a price increase, it has cowered in dread of a popular uprising. Instead of standing firm, confident of society's general, if grudging, support of its attempts to rationalize the economy, it has thrown wage increases to the workers at the slightest indication of trouble. Indeed, activists in some workplaces have become adept at manipulating their managers. I heard of one instance, completely unrelated to any impending price increase, in which activists at one institution circulated a leaflet demanding the erection of a monument to some long-past martyr to Stalinism. The manager, frightened at the prospect of unrest, lavished a preëmptive wage increase that no one had asked for on the entire plant. The difference between the increase in prices and the increase in wages is probably a good statistical

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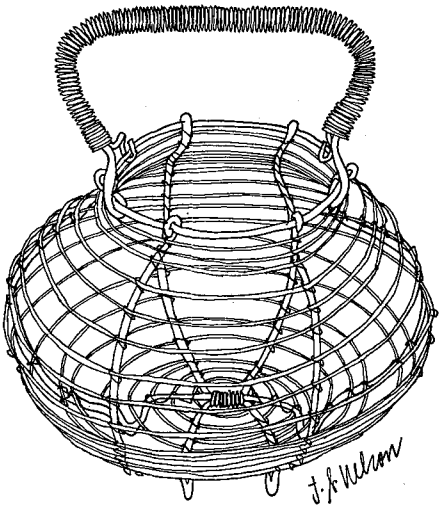
index of the value of the regime's monopoly of force and the disarray of the opposition. In any event, the regime can always print up more zlotys, even if the effect is one of double-digit, and even triple-digit, inflation, while the economy descends another gyre or two into the abyss.

Another area in which the economy's down-spiralling makes itself painfully felt in the daily lives of most Poles is housing. Here, too, appearances can be misleading. Drive around Warsaw and you'll see a lot of building going on. "The reason for that is simple," Bugaj, the opposition economist, explained. "If a building went up the way it's supposed to, in from three to six months, it wouldn't still be under construction six *years* after it was started, thereby giving this false impression of a lot of activity." A woman I know who had been out of the country since late 1981 and returned in May complained, "Nothing has changed. That's the most depressing thing. When I was growing up here, in the early sixties, you'd leave town for a month's vacation in the country and when you returned you wouldn't be able to believe all the changes in the city. Now I go away for seven years and come back and the same buildings are *still* under construction. It's frightening."

How could this have happened? There are several causes. To begin with, of course, there is the debt—the fact that instead of investing in new housing the regime is having to pay off old interest. But, ironically, some of the interest it is paying off derives from a disastrous series of investments incurred in the housing field. "Back in the seventies, in a particularly idiotic instance of an unfortunately quite typical decision-making process, it was decided that Poland would put most of its housing resources into prefab-housing factories," Bugaj told me. "For ten years, the primacy of prefab-housing block construction was simply Socialist dogma—this despite the fact that this method is extremely material-intensive and very costly, involves extravagant transportation expenses, and may even be dangerous, since the same structure may not be equally suitable for different sites. And, beyond that, the method is susceptible to terrible delays. A shortage of a single item can immobilize an entire factory for months; there's no room for improvisation." By the time the extent of the debacle had become evident, in the eighties, it was too late to change over; there weren't enough funds left for a transition.

One vast housing district gradually taking shape these days, about twenty minutes outside downtown Warsaw, is called Ursynow. If you had put your name on the waiting list about fifteen years ago, or had in the meantime been able to muster twenty million zlotys, you might be moving into a two-bedroom unit about now—or, rather, into the empty concrete shell of a two-bedroom unit. (The interior, including ceilings, floors, and partition walls, would be your problem.) It happens to be a district that a lot of young professionals are now moving into. (One way of raising the twenty million zlotys is by going abroad for a few years, earning a good hard-currency salary, living frugally, and returning with the surplus; twenty million zlotys is about thirteen thousand dollars at the current black-market rate.) And there is a so-called *yuppieszon* vogue in interior design among those who can afford it: privately made Scandinavian-style varnished-pine bookcases, tables, cabinets. One surprising lack in many of these apartments is chairs. Tables and bookcases are things that private entrepreneurs can mass-produce with relative ease, whereas chairs, being more complicated, would require more workers than the tax laws render profitable. So people sit around elegant blond wood tables on crates and boxes.

One evening, I stood on the narrow sixth-floor balcony of a modest Ursynow apartment occupied by a young couple, both of them doctors, and they pointed out the snail's pace of development in the neighboring buildings—how that one hadn't advanced in two years, and so on. The husband commented, "Look at this place. A hundred thousand people. If this were a town on its own, it would be one of the largest in the region. And no cinema, no theatre, *no street lights*. Too few schools, too few stores. The mail comes once a week. And we feel lucky."



As well they might. In Gdansk, just one apartment building for shipyard workers has gone up since 1981. Young Gdansk workers live in appalling circumstances: entire families squeezed into single, often unheated rooms in the backs of small apartments; great numbers of workers living in warrenlike conditions, or else living on with their parents until they're well into their thirties. Jan Gorczak, the twenty-six-year-old vice-chairman of the recent Gdansk strike committee, is married, but he and his wife can't get housing. He lives with his parents, and she lives with hers, and they have no real prospect of ever having an apartment of their own. They try to go out together on weekends.

The housing crisis, in turn, contributes to Poland's ongoing economic prostration. Many state-run industrial enterprises are hopelessly dilapidated and outmoded. They continue to exist only because of huge government subsidies, and really ought to be allowed to close. At the same time, other industrial sectors are suffering from severe labor shortages. It shouldn't be particularly difficult to take workers from one plant and retrain them for more productive work at some other plant, a few hundred miles away. But, of course, it's impossible: with the housing crunch, nobody can move.

IF the mood in Warsaw immediately after the strike was grim, as people tried to analyze the meaning of the failed actions, the mood in Gdansk was altogether different. Up there, it turned out, they had already discovered the meaning of the May strikes, and it was simple: they had won.

I arrived in Gdansk late one afternoon, and headed for St. Brygida's, a lovely old brick church that stands a few hundred yards from the Lenin Shipyard's main gate and has become a sort of focal point for Solidarity's efforts in the region. During the strike, the church annex had served as a coördinating center for journalists and out-

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side advisers. By the time I arrived, the shipyard day shift had let out, and dozens of workers—strike veterans, and particularly the very young ones—were milling about St. Brygida's interior courtyard, basking in the sun, swapping stories and snapshots of their glory days, and joining in rousing guitar-led choruses of old patriotic songs with new, timely lyrics. (Poles are always breaking into song.)

On a bench against a sidewall of the church, I struck up a conversation with a few of these kids, and soon a knot of onlookers formed. I asked whether this courtyard had served as a gathering place before the strike, and they said no—not for them, anyway. Many of them had been at the shipyard only a few years, or, in some cases, only a few months. They had been recruited from outlying districts to fill gaps left by continuing purges of veterans from the 1980-81 phase. (Since the declaration of martial law, over a thousand of the shipyard's most active workers have been sacked.)

"On the first day, my foreman threatened me," one young man recalled. "He said, 'If you join the strike, you'll end up on a blacklist.' I told him, 'Put my name on the first line.' "

Why had he told him that?

"We can't stand this Communism! We're sick of it. You can't make ends meet. We earn twenty-three thousand zlotys a month, and a jacket costs thirty thousand zlotys."

"I only earn twelve thousand," a teen-age girl put in. "A kilo of apples costs five hundred. I'm paid by piecework, and, the way I figure it, my hourly rate comes to about ninety-six zlotys." (Such figures sometimes fail to include the bonuses that workers receive and that may increase actual salaries, but the wages are, in any case, pitiably low.)

"You can't even break for a cigarette," another worker observed. "The foreman sees you, he docks you the whole hour."

"We're not slaves," the first young man went on. "We can't stand the waste. And all those clerks and managers in the front office sitting on their fat asses, pushing paper and looking down on us. One day several weeks ago, they had me working twenty-four hours straight, sandblasting and lugging the sand out of this new ship's hull. The foreman kept yelling at us, telling us we were being inefficient. But you could hardly breathe in there. They had us wearing face masks, but even so you had to stop every few minutes to spit gobs of sand out of your mouth."

One man, a veteran from earlier times, remarked that back in 1980-81 the foremen had been more decent. Indeed, they were the Solidarity organizers, the sharpest people in the yard. After the coup, though, those guys were systematically weeded out and replaced by this new sort.

Why did these kids stay on? Why didn't they quit?

"And go where?" one of them asked. "It's the same everywhere, unless you have connections."

The girl said that she had signed on for two years and would have to pay a hundred-and-twenty-thousand-zloty fine if she broke the contract.

A boy concurred, saying, "They make you all sorts of promises—fine housing, fifty thousand zlotys a month. I live in a single room with three other guys, we take shifts sleeping on the two beds, and I have yet to see even twenty thousand zlotys."

The sandblaster said he stayed on because the shipyard was where the action was—the only hope.

There was a pause in the conversation, and then the girl said, "If we go on working like this, nothing will ever change. Those who rule over us are only people like us. They think they're gods."

ON the plane up from Warsaw, I'd met a quiet and intense but friendly young man, dressed counterculture style, in army fatigues, who introduced himself as Leszek Dziumowicz. He explained that he was a filmmaker who'd been commuting to Gdansk for the past several weeks, because he and a colleague, Piotr Bikont, were rushing to complete an independent video documentary on the recent events at the shipyard. He and Bikont had been editing another documentary earlier in the spring, using independent studio facilities housed in the top story of the Gdansk bishopric's main curial building, next door to St. Mary's Basilica, in the middle of the old town. "An incredible place," he told me. "Great equipment in excellent condition, superbly managed—one of the best studios anywhere in Poland, frankly. The editing facilities are being used literally around the clock by a

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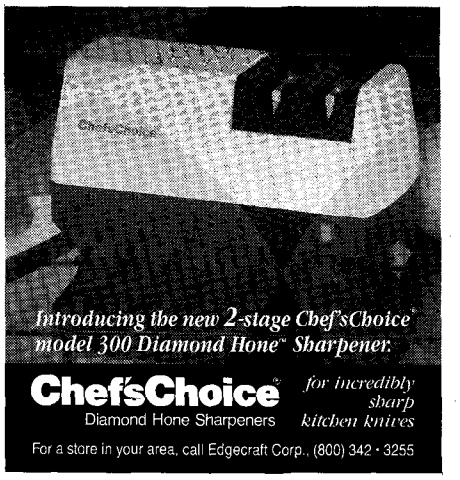

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variety of independent filmmakers and video journalists."

With the outbreak of the strike, however, the two men changed their activities altogether. The studio kept a camera and crew in the shipyard the entire time, eventually smuggling in over sixty hours of blank tape and smuggling out over sixty hours of historic footage. That footage was immediately made available to Western correspondents and then edited, every few days, into mini-newsreels. These, in turn, were mass-copied and conveyed, through various underground and church networks, throughout the country. Another aspect of the regime's onetime monopoly on information had been shattered. This year, people all over the country were viewing independent video footage of a strike almost as quickly as it was being shot. Within days of the strike's conclusion, a six-hour rough-cut compilation of scenes from the entire event had been put together and was in circulation. Now Dziumowicz and Bikont were feverishly trying to complete a finished cut of a documentary of a more reasonable size and shape. Dziumowicz invited me to drop by the studio whenever I wanted, assuring me that he and Bikont would be there pretty much any time.

And when I did, there they were—hunched intently over a formidable hive of modules and monitors. Bikont turned out to be a hulking figure with short-cropped blond hair, who wore a gray sweatsuit. His face had a disarming way of breaking into an utterly boyish grin when his enthusiasm for the project swept over him—which was often. He and Dziumowicz had been inside the yard themselves for much of the strike, he now informed me, serving as ad-hoc cameramen for hours at a time.

"As it's evolving, this film is turning out to be in part about how the camera itself became one of the strikers," Bikont said. "The camera was a sort of weapon—in some ways, the strikers' only weapon. In moments of danger, the call would go out. Say a police cordon was advancing menacingly on one of the gates. The P.A. system would come alive, crackling, 'Camera to Gate 2, Camera to Gate 2!' We'd drop whatever we were doing, rush over there, and aim the camera at the advancing phalanx—it was like a bazooka—and the police would suddenly fall back, in full retreat, shielding their faces from the lens. It was like magic—like one of those Polynesian tales, you know, where if you can learn somebody's name you gain power over him. They were terrified of having their faces recorded. Around two in the morning one dark moonless night, the police apparently tried some sort of provocation at one gate, because we were suddenly being shaken awake. 'Quick! Come with the camera!' 'It's pitch-black out there,' we said. 'The lens won't be able to pick up anything.' 'It doesn't matter,' they assured us. 'Just bring the camera.' We did, and it *didn't* matter: we aimed blindly, and the police scrambled away."

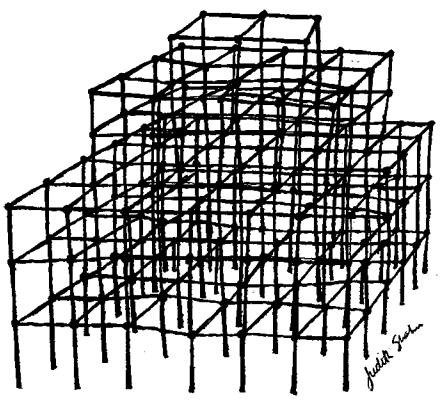
I remarked that such behavior by the security forces of a onetime totalitarian state seemed utterly topsy-turvy.

"I know," Bikont said. "I *know*. It was incredible."

I pointed out that in the past it was the police who videotaped strikers and demonstrators, for *their* purposes.

"Precisely," Bikont said. "Here it was the opposite. The workers would suspect that such-and-such a fellow was an infiltrator. They wouldn't throw him out—they would come to us and say, 'Please, register *his* face.' Another time, someone was saying, 'Look over there—the police are photographing us.' 'It doesn't matter,' another guy would say. 'But let's us photograph them.' We would, and they would put down their cameras and run away."

I borrowed a copy of the six-hour version and, using a spare monitor in a back room of the studio, I immersed myself in the world of the strike. There were many remarkable scenes, among them interviews with mischievous ten-year-olds, daredevils who braved the ire of the police by squeezing themselves through the cordon to bring food in to the strikers and to spirit messages (and videotape) out. (In recent years, the regime has been sponsoring a sort of cult of the child heroes of the Polish Resistance: the kids who served—and, in many cases, died—while smuggling supplies and messages back and forth between Resistance units during the Second World War. The history of the units themselves is sometimes too vexing politically for the regime to celebrate wholeheartedly: after all, many adult heroes of the Polish Home Army, after valiantly fighting the Nazis, were liquidated by arriving Soviet forces. But the heroism of the children is somehow unsullied—is something that everybody can agree on—so there has lately been a profusion of public monuments featuring sculptures of the little ones, cast in bronze: helmets, oversized coats, machine guns, sombre expressions in Keane eyes. The trouble—from the regime's point of view—is that this cult appears to have given the present generation of ten-year-olds ideas: they are happily inserting themselves into a glorious tradition.)



The video also brought out the grinding aspect of the strike—the fear, the uncertainty, the tension, the spirit-sapping exhaustion. One sequence contains a conversation (lasting almost half an hour and recorded in its entirety) between Lech Walesa and one of the shipyard's deputy directors. The director, flanked by fellow-managers, stands smugly on a porch at the top of some steps leading into an office building. Curiously, a couple of them are wearing hard hats. (To look more like workers? Because they fear that the workers will try to bonk them?) Walesa stands at the foot of the steps, surrounded by his colleagues. At length, he draws the man into a dialogue, which grows progressively more heated until finally the director is renewing management's offer of a handsome pay raise—over fifteen thousand zlotys each, across the board—if they'll only just go back to work.

"You see what you're doing," Walesa shoots back, exasperated. "You see what you're always doing. The shipyard is a billion zlotys in debt and you offer us a big pay raise. It's people like you, always willing to print up more money out of nothing, who got us into this mess in the first place. Well, we say no. We want structural reforms. We want a say in how the place gets run. We want to start working again—right now, today—but under new principles that will secure our

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future livelihoods, so that two years down the line we won't have to go out on strike all over again, racking our nerves like this. That's what's needed, and not money, because there is no money."

"Ah, gentlemen," the director replies, dripping with condescension. "You just want to create a scandal."

The most poignant scenes in the video accumulate toward the end, as the workers—especially the young ones—begin to realize that they are not going to win, that they are isolated and their ranks are crumbling. The strike committee is shown huddling, trying desperately to puzzle some way out. At length, the strikers gather in the shipyard cafeteria. A representative of the strike committee outlines the committee's proposal—that they all just declare the strike over, unilaterally, and leave, marching together to St. Brygida's for an evening Mass. Another representative gets up to read the text that the committee is proposing to release. As he reads, the camera pans the audience, which is stunned into silence, and tears: "We have taken a sovereign decision to leave the shipyard without any agreements with the authorities, whose attitude has made understanding impossible. We did not undertake this strike for ourselves, and we shall not beg in our own country. . . ."

At first, there is vociferous denunciation of the proposal, but Walesa gets up and gives a passionate speech that sways the room. In the video's final scenes we see the evening march to St. Brygida's: dignified, solemn, *silent*, the workers walking in stately rows, self-consciously and symbolically led by a cross, a large photo-portrait of the Pope, and another of the Black Madonna of Czestochowa, the national shrine—the bells of all the churches in Gdansk pealing in the background.

"Take a letter."

• •

THE next afternoon, a Thursday, back at St. Brygida's courtyard, I had another occasion to talk with some of the young workers there. I asked about the strike's conclusion, and one of them, a member of the strike committee, described how they had come up with the idea of ending the strike as they did. They'd been down to four dénouements: (1) martyrdom, with the ZOMOs pouring in; (2) acceptance of management's last offer, which was insulting; (3) staying put, and experiencing further thinning of their ranks and infiltration by police agents until, finally, the infiltrators might just suddenly clobber everybody else; or . . . or . . . or . . . and then someone came up with the fourth option. And, yes, at first there had been a lot of resentment, a terrible sense of defeat, but then, when they were actually doing it, marching through the streets, with the church bells pealing, they had experienced a tremendous rush.

"We felt just like the men at Westerplatte," one of them said.

At where?

"The men at Westerplatte, you know, in the poem."

It turns out that there is a famous Polish poem, by Konstanty Ildefons Galczynski, which everybody knows, that celebrates the heroic, doomed stand made by the hopelessly outnumbered defenders of Westerplatte, a little spit of land at the head of the Gdansk (then Danzig) harbor on September 1, 1939, the first day of the Second World War:

> When the days were fulfilled
> and one had to die in summer,
> straight to heaven, in rows
> of four,
> went the soldiers of Westerplatte.

Reprisals had already begun. Management wasn't firing the returning strikers outright; rather, it was, for example, arranging that they be expelled from their living quarters, just like that, from one day to the next, and then firing them for tardiness when they showed up late for work the next day. The strike committee was maintaining an office in the church annex. Two members of the committee were on duty each afternoon to take reports of such reprisals and to improvise emergency assistance.

Two of the foremost veteran activists in the region, Bogdan Borusewicz and his wife, Alina Pienkowska—organizers from the period before the August, 1980, strike—had taken charge of this emergency. Back in December, 1981, Borusewicz had been able to escape arrest and gone underground. (He nevertheless managed to father a child with Alina during this period, and even managed to attend the baby's baptism, disguised as a woman. Walesa kissed his hand.) To-

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day, Borusewicz, Pienkowska, her fourteen-year-old son from an earlier marriage, and their four-year-old daughter live in a one-room apartment in Gdansk, from which they continue to organize half the Baltic coast—in this particular case, by helping the young workers who are being evicted from their quarters to find lodging with sympathetic townspeople who happen to have extra rooms. That way, the workers not only avoid getting fired but become all the more tied into the movement, and management suddenly has a doubly dangerous employee on its hands. It's precisely this sort of organizing work—quotidian, dull—that has preceded all the recent Polish uprisings.

That Thursday afternoon, as on every Thursday afternoon these days, Lech Walesa was holding an open forum in the Sunday-school classroom of St. Brygida's annex. The place was like a yeshiva, with Reb Lech at the head of the room, all the disciples—most of them very young (during the 1980 strike he was known as Lech; these kids all call him Mr. Walesa)—scrunched up on miniature benches, their knees in their faces. They'd ask him questions, and he'd discourse. "We don't want to return to capitalism here," he said, for example. "You can have an aquarium filled with fishes, and you can have fish soup. Now, you can turn the aquarium into fish soup, but you can't turn the fish soup back into an aquarium."

One kid asked him whom they should learn from.

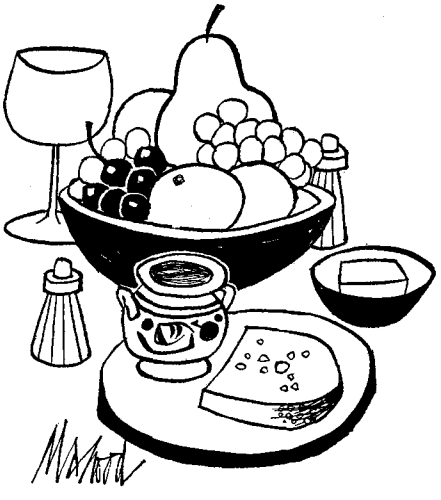
"Learn from yourselves! Like me. I went to vocational school and ended up a Nobel. Don't wait for others to tell you what to do. I'm getting old. I will fall. You will have to carry on."

Walesa is an unusual public figure. As an orator, in particular, he is completely incoherent; foreign correspondents talk about the way he uses up interpreters at the rate of about one every ten minutes, because he's seldom thinking anywhere near linearly. And yet he makes an immediate connection with his audience. His gift is to express the mood of the crowd at any given moment: if they are confused, he will be confused—right up until about five minutes before they themselves become clear, and then, suddenly, he is crystal clear, and leading them. He is a tremendously dynamic speaker; indeed, I've never seen so dynamic, so almost violent, a defender of moderation: his hands chopping, his face erupting, his shoulders jerking, his legs stomping, he is saying, "We have to take things one step at a time."

IN early 1982, Jacek Kuron, the great opposition theorist, referring to the situation of the country following the imposition of martial law, declared, "The operation was a success, but the patient died." As I considered the current post-strike situation in Gdansk while on the plane back to Warsaw, I realized how in this case Kuron's formulation might have to be recast: "The operation was a fiasco, but the patient thrived." Indeed, back in Warsaw, spirits seemed to be picking up as well; the sorrow was lifting, and people were beginning to focus on the various tasks at hand.

I went to visit Henryk Wujec, another veteran organizer, who, at forty-seven, was one of the old men. Like Borusewicz and Kuron, he'd been a key member of KOR, the Committee for the Defense of the Workers, a band of about forty intellectuals who openly and courageously assisted repressed workers during the late seventies, helping to set the stage for all that followed. Wujec and his wife, Ludwika, had been instrumental in putting out *Robotnik*, KOR's biweekly bulletin. They live with their son, Pawel, in an apartment in a gray housing block in the Stegny district, on the southern edge of Warsaw.

The Wujecs' place, though it was externally like all the other apartments I'd visited in Stegny, had a decidedly different feel on the inside. It had an airy, expansive quality, with a big open entry and living area, and the few other areas set over to one side. What it had, to be specific, was no walls. "I know," said Ludwika, a veteran of the struggle herself. "In my fury during the years after the coup when Henio was in prison, I tore them all out. That's how I channelled my rage."



Wujec added, "One day, sitting there in prison, I got this note from Pawel: 'Dad, you better come home quick. Mom has gone crazy and is ripping the place to pieces.' " He laughed. Wujec laughs easily and well. "But I like it this way," he insisted.

"In the old days, the police would make regular visits, and turn the place inside out," Wujec went on. "It got to the point where I kept a special packet for them, over there by the entryway, consisting of all the back issues of *Robotnik* since their last visit—it speeded things up. I've become pals with those guys. One of them was a private when we first met. Now he's a high officer. Whenever I see him, I go over and say, 'I *made* you.' "

Wujec made it all sound like a lark. From his tone, you'd never suspect that on at least two occasions during the seventies he was beaten to a bloody pulp by gangs of police thugs. Photographs of his battered face were icons during this period. (To this day, the police still won't grant him a passport.)

We went over to a big table and sat down. By this time, I'd become impressed by Wujec's English, which was surprisingly good, although it had an exotic singsong quality to it, and I asked him where he'd picked it up.

"In prison," he said. "From my Tamil."

"Your Tamil?"

"Ah, yes," he said. "Haven't you heard about our Tamils? The regime had a real problem with the eleven of us." The so-called Solidarity Eleven were the leaders who were incarcerated for the longest time after martial law; they were supposed to become the subjects of an evolving, endlessly deferred show trial, which was suspended in the summer of 1984, when they were all released (only, in some cases, to be rearrested on other charges). "They didn't want to put us together in the cells, for fear we'd be plotting. Nor did they want to put any other Poles in with us, for fear we'd convert them. Putting us in solitary would just have meant more international protests. The Tamils were a godsend. One day, a Tamil tourist—you know, from Sri Lanka—was passing through customs on a transit visa and suddenly tripped.

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And no wonder—the police noticed he was wearing unusually large shoes. They told him to take them off, and it turned out he had a kilo of heroin in each shoe. And then it turned out that there were ten other Tamils on the same flight, all of them with these ridiculously oversized shoes. So that solved the jail problem."

All during our conversation, the entry buzzer kept going off, with people dropping by to kibitz—the night life of Stegny. The big table was becoming a sort of forum, everyone bringing everyone else up to date on the latest gossip. There was much discussion, for example, of the case of Janusz Onyszkiewicz, Solidarity's principal press spokesman. On May 1st, there had been a peaceful demonstration, a sort of alternative May Day march, near the church of St. Stanislaw Kostka in Warsaw. At a certain moment, apparently on cue, plainclothes police who had planted themselves all through the crowd pulled out truncheons and began whacking everybody in sight. Onyszkiewicz reported details of the incident to Western journalists, whereupon he was arrested and charged with disseminating false information. At his trial, the defense could easily have presented photographs of the melee, but the essence of the case against him was that he had claimed the police had been wielding wooden truncheons, whereas none of the truncheons in the Polish police arsenal is made of wood. Therefore, the prosecutor argued, he had obviously been spreading false information, photographs or no. And, indeed, the judge so ruled. Onyszkiewicz spent several days in jail and, as a further penance, was sentenced to perform twenty hours of social work—"work for the good of society," in the judge's words. "But that's what he was already doing!" his friends around the table pointed out. "That's how he got into trouble in the first place." The social work he was now going to be required to perform, however, was to don a garbageman's traditional orange vest and go out and collect litter for twenty hours. The judge, no doubt, intended the sentence as some kind of public humiliation, but Onyszkiewicz's friends were already busy planning how to get some orange vests, sew on the traditional red Solidarnosc logos, and accompany Onyszkiewicz on his rounds. Solidarity, as usual, they pointed out, would be cleaning up the regime's mess.

At length, the forum thinned out, and I was able to take Wujec aside and get his view of the current situation. Did he feel that Solidarity had suffered a defeat during the recent strikes?

"It wasn't a war," he replied. "It was a little skirmish, as in the Middle Ages, when on the night before a major battle a few knights from the opposing camps would come out and engage in preliminaries. As a battle, it wasn't decisive. On the other hand, there was a breakthrough: you could say that, in a way, it marked the end of the period of Solidarity I—the Solidarity that began in August, 1980, and persisted through martial law and up to this spring. A whole new group seized the initiative this time—radical young workers and students who had been creating their own movement, completely independent of the old structure, now flooded onto the scene and declared Solidarity their own. So this is no defeat; if anything, it's a sign of hope. But it also presents a difficult challenge. The structure shaped by martial law is going to have to change. Under the current, relatively open conditions, activists are going to have to cease living out a secret conspiracy, removed from everybody else. We'll have to exist openly, aboveground, in the factories, with people. It will be difficult and hazardous, but there's no choice. Furthermore, the role of the earlier generation of activists—my generation—will have to diminish. We will need to stop being leaders and instead serve as teachers, perhaps, or, rather, midwives. A new generation is rising, which identifies with Solidarity but must be able to create its own forms of action, and we older activists are going to need to facilitate the transition to their leadership. I'm not sure how well prepared all of us older activists—shaped, as we were, by the struggle to create Solidarity and then survive martial law—are to carry this transition off with grace, but it is our heaviest responsibility."

Adam Michnik is one of the foremost opposition theorists and leaders. Born in 1946, the son of a high Communist official in postwar Poland, he became a hero of the 1968 student uprisings, and then a leader of KOR and a dynamic figure in the Solidarity period. In private, he speaks with a machine-gun stutter, but he somehow

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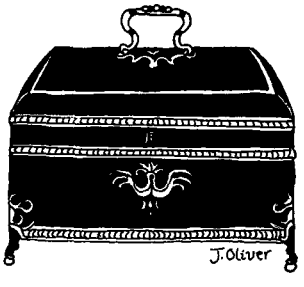
masters it when he addresses crowds—as he did, for example, in May, 1981, managing single-handed to calm a mob that was about to lynch several policemen in Otwock, and thus saving their lives. He has proved himself a brilliant polemicist, particularly when writing during his frequent incarcerations—he was arrested in December, 1981, as one of the Solidarity Eleven. (His collected "Letters from Prison and Other Essays" has been published in America by the University of California Press.) He recently married a former state prosecutor in Gdansk and, just a few months ago, became a father; he named the boy after Antoni Slonimski, the great Polish essayist and poet of an earlier generation, whom he once served as secretary. I interviewed him in his apartment, which was formerly his father's and hence a fairly nice one. A little plaster bust of Marx stood on a side shelf—perhaps a relic of his father, who, in the late forties, helped edit the authorized Polish edition of Marx's complete writings.

Michnik began by saying that he'd be happy to talk about anything except the strikes. He was sick of talking about the strikes. When it came to the strikes, he was burned out. For eight days, Michnik had been holed up in St. Brygida's; he'd been, as he put it, "the Larry Speakes of the shipyard strike."

O.K., I said, but what about the mood in the weeks before the strikes—the landscape before the battle? (Poles, no doubt owing to the circumstances of their history, are endlessly discoursing on "landscapes" before, during, above, below, beside, between, and after "battle.")



"I never expected such a big wave," Michnik replied. "I was even afraid beforehand that such a wave could lead to a violent confrontation. I was convinced that the most important field of struggle for democratic values at this point had shifted to Russia."

That Poland's future would be resolved in Moscow?

"Well, to a certain extent. Not only Poland's but all of Eastern and Central Europe's. It's an incredibly important place right now. And I was fearing a replay of a certain historic pattern, in which revolts in Poland end up blocking reform in Russia. But I've since become convinced that this is a time when additional pressure should be applied. And from that point of view I judge these strikes highly: they've strengthened the people's side."

I had been pretty sure that Michnik's self-imposed prohibition on discussion of the strikes wouldn't last. "Many Western diplomats, I know, disagree," he went on. "They judge the strikes a failure. The difference between our views is that when the strikes started, the diplomats were expecting a new August, 1980, and couldn't understand why there was no general strike. But this wasn't August—it had a different structure, a different dynamic, a different meaning. These strikes perhaps played a role closer to those in Poznan in 1956 or in Radom and Ursus in 1976. They were a *sign*. Now our country is facing a dilemma. On the one hand, we have the possibility of achieving a consensus, a social compact, an anti-crisis agreement. Either that or we'll have an explosion. This is inevitable otherwise, and sooner than Jaruzelski imagines."

What did he mean by an explosion?

"We tend to look at each new crisis from the perspective of the previous ones, so I'm unable to envision the details. But all explosions have a common basis: at a certain point, people simply refuse to be obedient anymore. The coming explosion will be a rebellion of objects, supplemented by a rebellion of people. A shorthand way of describing this future is 'Chernobyl.' "

I asked Michnik if he worried about some sort of ecocatastrophe in Silesia, say.

"There's nothing to worry about or expect—it's here already," he said. "Poland is in a state of ecodisaster. And it's no consolation whatsoever that East Germany and Czechoslovakia are in a similar state."

I told Michnik what Gornicki had said on the Brinkley show about the I.M.F. and its demands for austerity.

"There's one problem with Gornicki's formulation," he said. "All my life, I've been hearing from Gornicki and his colleagues that they have to commit all these different absurdities because they've been ordered to by the Russians. Now they tell us they're being ordered to do them by the I.M.F. It's very touching, this obedience of the Polish Communist Party to the I.M.F."

But the fact is, I said, there are economic realities—for instance, the debt—that would enforce terrible austerities no matter who was in charge.

"But they don't have to be accompanied by the prohibition of union pluralism, by desecration of the law, by maintaining the role of the Nomenklatura. The key to any resolution of the Polish crisis is going to be political change. The Nomenklatura is to Poland what a cancerous tumor is to a body, and it has to be removed. And until then no I.M.F. or credits or price hikes are going to help. For the last ten years, there has been an ongoing decline in people's standard of living, real salaries, and so forth—nothing has changed for the better. The various sorts of screw-tightening don't do a thing. This is the main failure of most Western economic advice: the sort of cure that might work in a free market becomes a sad caricature of itself here.

"Jaruzelski seems to find resonance in the West when he tells his interlocutors, 'It's either me or chaos.' But the truth is it's not either Jaruzelski or chaos. Jaruzelski *equals* chaos. There has *never* been as much economic chaos in Poland as there is today. He's a prisoner of his past. For him, the first priority is not to fight the economic crisis but to fight Solidarity. Which is idiotic."

I remarked that, as part of this fight against Solidarity, Jaruzelski seemed to be trying to foster a sort of bourgeois buffer, a new class of people, who might feel they had an investment in the status quo. What, I asked, did Michnik think of the new class of Polish rich?

"In any economically significant terms, the new rich are marginal—there are just not enough of them to matter," he said. "But, in any case, the attitude of those people toward Solidarity is ambiguous. Some of them are people who came to private business from the security forces, and they don't like Solidarity. Some are types who the only thing they think about in their life is money, and those people think that Solidarity people are nuts. But quite a few of these new rich were once members of Solidarity themselves—were among its most dynamic and

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efficient members. They are people who lost their jobs after the December coup and had to go into private business, and these people are *financing* Solidarity."

He returned, despite himself, to the strikes. "It's difficult to say what the results of the strikes will be," he said. "I think there will be profound changes in Poland's officialdom. But, again, this is directly linked to what will happen in the Soviet Union. In fairness, I should point out that Poles in general are not aware of this link. I'm pretty unique in offering such a claim."

What *did* he think of what was going on in the Soviet Union these days?

"This is the deepest of all the crises in the Communist world—the one with the deepest conflicts. *Glasnost* has opened a Pandora's box, all the wild demons have escaped, and one cannot foresee what will happen. I recently published a piece in *Tygodnik Powszechny*—"

Under his own name? He was allowed to publish openly, aboveground, under his own name?

"Ah, yes," Michnik said, laughing. (Poland *is* a strange country.) "It was a two-part piece, using the example of Stalinism but developing a sort of anatomy of the main ideological camps in the Soviet Union today. And it seems to me that the main conflict in the years ahead will be played out between those defending so-called Western values, understood broadly, and the nationalists who will be defending the values of an authoritarian society. I believe that Communism—at any rate, as an ideology—is over in Russia."

So it will be liberalism versus czarism?

"You are speaking metaphorically there, right? Yes, I think so."

And where does Poland fit in?

"There's no single opinion in Poland about that. There are people in Poland who think that Gorbachev has created a chance for departing from Marxism just in the economic sphere, that a sort of Pinochetization of Poland is possible: strict control and a free market. Some believe that there is a chance for democratic openings, that Poland should try to work out its own road to democracy. And there are those who are waiting for Gorbachev to break his neck. I think Jaruzelski is one of them, even though in the outside world he is perceived as Gorbachev's best friend and partner."

What did he imagine that Gorbachev and his colleagues saw when they looked at Solidarity—purely a threat, or the possibility of something useful?

"Up to now, only a threat, because in the Soviet Union Polish affairs are still handled by the K.G.B., as they have been traditionally. About Russia the official Soviet press uses the language of *glasnost*, but about Poland it still uses the language of the Brezhnev era. And yet even this may be changing. The other day, I was astonished to see a little item in the Moscow *Literaturnaya Gazeta* which mentioned the possibility that there might have been Soviet involvement in the Katyn massacre of Polish officers at the beginning of the war. Up to now, of course, it has been absolute dogma, despite all the evidence, that the Nazis committed the massacre. So this article was a breakthrough of sorts—perhaps a signal. It's too much to say that the Soviet press has emancipated itself. Let's just say that the steering wheel doesn't work as well as it used to. And this is a novelty."

He seemed to read a lot of Soviet journals these days.

"Yes."

Was that unusual among Polish oppositionists?

"Absolutely!" He laughed.

What did such people say to him?

"Just recently, they stopped laughing. Before, they thought I'd gone crazy."

And how did he answer them?

"I'd say, 'A person can lose all his money and not have to give up his brain, too.' In analyzing political changes, one shouldn't let oneself be guided by phobias or sentiments. I've always disliked Polish nationalism and ethnocentrism. Up to now, I disliked them for aesthetic reasons. Now I dislike them for political reasons, because they're outright stupidity."

After a moment's pause, he resumed his discussion of current Soviet affairs. "When I ask myself about the origins of the recent changes in the Soviet Union, I end up breaking it down like this: forty per cent technological defeat; fifteen per cent the changes going on in China; fifteen per cent Reagan's foreign policy; and the rest—Solidarity. The entire team around Gorbachev realized that they had a choice of setting up reforms or else some Russian version of Solidarity would move to create reforms *against* them. In this sense, Gorbachev is not a reformer but a counter-reformer. In the history of the Catholic Church, inner reform of the Church came as a response to the Reformation. The Counter-Reformation was not a rejection of the Reformation; rather, it was an assimilation of its critical themes. And that is Gorbachev's effort."

Could he imagine a scenario in which the Soviet regime absorbed enough of the critique, in a real—not just a paper—way, so as to create a decent world for people here? Or was this all just one more phase in an eventual complete breakdown?

"Rather the latter. A superpower at the heart of the Russian empire may perhaps survive, but it will have to stop being 'real Communism.' Nobody knows what Communism is or could be or should be, but when we say 'real Communism' we know what we're talking about. I think the twenty-first century presents a clear alternative: you can be either a totalitarian, Communist country or a modern country. The ideas of the Soviet reformers are like those of a woman who wants to get pregnant without what comes before and without all the natural consequences."

But, I persisted, I wanted to be clear on his feelings about Gorbachev.

"I don't *have* feelings about Gorbachev. I don't know his intentions, whether he is sincere or not, and I don't care. What I'm interested in is the social consequences of what is happening in Moscow. I'm not pro-Gorbachev; I'm pro-democratic change. If I were to identify with somebody in Russia, it wouldn't be Gorbachev, it would be Sakharov. But from the point of view of possible scenarios for democratic reform, incredibly important things are taking place there. Things that can't be subsumed either, on the one hand, under the myth of the Evil Empire or, on the other, by imagining it all to be the

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conscious policy of a liberal leadership that wants to turn Russia into a democratic country.

"Obviously, it's possible that the Stalinists will win. Gorbachev *can* lose. But the changes that have already occurred in the Russian spirit are, in my opinion, irreversible. Just as Poland, despite the introduction of martial law, didn't revert to being Poland Before Solidarity. Things had gone too far."

I cautiously tried to move the conversation back to the subject of the recent strikes. Was he at all disconcerted by the failure of Solidarity veterans to come out in support of the new generation?

"No. It's always the case that the driving force is young people. The older generation in Solidarity are doing other things, in other ways, but the force—the real force—in moments of conflict is always youth. Always."

But many commentators, I pointed out, were saying that the outcome of the strikes, if anything, showed that Solidarity was dead.

"But in what way does it prove that? That we were too weak, or what?"

That at a key moment the spirit of solidarity—small 's'—was shown to have been beaten down over the past seven years. Finally, people didn't come out in support of Nowa Huta or the Lenin Shipyard.

"I disagree. It's very seldom that vast social movements can be interpreted by a moral category, like 'solidarity' with a small 's.' This was not the moment for a general strike, and it was wise of Walesa not to call for one. But in places where strikes did occur it was only Solidarity—there was nothing else."

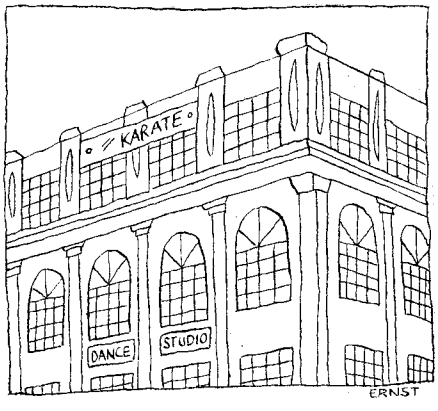
Michnik paused, then continued, "Seven years after the crushing of the 1956 Hungarian uprising, even two years after, there was nothing left of the Hungarian opposition. It was the same story in Czechoslovakia—there were under a hundred people in Charter '77. In Poland, the whole movement is still here. There is no movement in the world that could from one moment to the next, at a whistle, produce a general strike. If someone still believed in our old slogan 'Solidarity Ten Million Solid,' this person could, I suppose, ask, 'Where are those ten million today?' But he would have to be a fool to ask such a question. It's obvious that the ten million were never ten million activists. Nevertheless, according to our estimates, there are, for example, still several hundred underground journals published in the country, and frequently those who do this publishing don't take part in the strikes. But Solidarity is like a fresco—it has everything in it: those who publish journals, those who organize independent seminars, people who go to Masses for the Fatherland, people who create scandals in the street, and people who go on strike. And everybody is needed. Solidarity is all these people and all these activities. And in this country you cannot do anything without Solidarity. That is the power of Solidarity. It may be that we are incapable of mounting a general strike today, but if one happens the only banners you will see will be Solidarity banners."

I told Michnik that many of the young people I talked with during this trip had spoken of hopelessness, of a longing to emigrate. One of his most powerful prison essays, drafted in 1982, when the regime was offering release from prison to any activist who would agree to leave the country, had passionately urged people *not* to emigrate. What would he say to a hopeless twenty-year-old today? Why should he not emigrate?

"I wouldn't say today to anyone that he should not emigrate," Michnik replied. "That was a very particular situation. I would tell him why *I* am not emigrating. I would tell him that if you have two roads ahead of you—the easier and the more difficult—from an aesthetic point of view it's better to take the difficult one."

I said I wondered if his having newly become the father of an infant son had changed his political views. Did it, for one thing, make him more apprehensive about going to prison?

"I was afraid—terribly—before, too. I went to prison without any pleasure whatsoever. As for my son's birth, it has made me more powerful. It strengthened me, because up to now I knew I could only be ashamed in front of my friends, and now I know I would be ashamed in front of my son. There's nothing much I can leave him as an inheritance. Not money, because I don't have money. The brain is average. The only thing I can leave him is the feeling that he had a decent father."



As I said goodbye to Michnik, I recalled one of the aphorisms of his mentor Antoni Slonimski—the man after whom he named his son. "When in doubt," Slonimski had said, "it's probably best to do the *decent* thing."

MY trip was drawing to a close. A few hours after I spoke with Michnik, I was talking to one of the leading journalists in the underground, a woman in her early forties. I asked her how she had got started in her line of work, and she began her story, as so many activists do, by recalling the student movement of 1968. She told of the brutality with which that movement had been expunged—so many friends sent to prison, the storm of scathing propaganda decrying them all as C.I.A. agents, Zionist fronts—and of her own retreat from activism in the years immediately thereafter: how she curled back into a quiet, methodical, and successful academic vocation, pursuing a graduate degree with the idea of an eventual career as a professor of some sort.

"As you know," she continued, "in June of 1976 there were those uprisings in Radom and Ursus. The regime put them down rather quickly, but then there began a series of terrible retaliatory proceedings against the worker activists—arrests, beatings, tortures, and trials with long, punishing sentences. In Warsaw, one heard about these things. And then, one day in the fall, I received word through a friend that Jacek Kuron wanted to speak with me. I, of course, knew him from back in '68. This was the period when he and a few others were beginning to establish KOR and, in particular, were trying to monitor developments at the trials, to assist the families of the arrested workers, and to alert the international media to what was going on. And what he was asking me to do was this: because my English was very

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good, he wanted me to accompany a Swedish television crew that would be coming to Poland, and to interpret for them as they covered the trials in Ursus. This was one of the very few teams of Western media that were taking any interest at all in what was happening to those people. So, anyway, I froze up. I told him to give me a few days—I'd let him know.

"I went through three days of terror. I was so scared, I was frantic. I was terrified of being thrown back into those news stories of '68—'She, a C.I.A. agent, et cetera.' I was afraid of sacrificing my prospects for a comfortable university career. I began seeking out all my friends for advice, which is so stupid—once you start seeking out advice, you'll easily find all kinds. You see, instead of thinking, I'd allowed myself to become frightened. But then I had this moment of illumination—how I was being *idiotic*, how the way I was behaving was absolutely shameful. For pity's sake, workers were being *tortured!* What was I doing? I immediately went over to Kuron's and told him that of course I'd go with the Swedish crew. I did, and then I did the next thing, and a year later I was on the staff of *Robotnik*. And I haven't stopped."

She smiled. "But the reason I mention all this to you is to give you some idea of how incredibly things have changed," she went on. "In 1968, talking to foreign journalists was one of the main charges. Even in early 1980, it was still pretty risky. Only Kuron would talk regularly to the BBC when it called for information. He once told me how frightened he'd get sometimes. And here we are, eight years later, and I'm talking to you without a care, everybody is talking to everybody—it's incredible."

It was incredible. But there was even more to it than that, and her words suddenly snapped the situation into vivid relief for me. *That* was one of the main differences between Poland in 1981 and Poland today: it was as if all the prohibitions on words had ceased to matter—the regime didn't care what anybody said to anyone, the regime hardly even cared what anybody *printed*. Yet there was a dark undercurrent to this transformation, for if the prohibitions had largely ceased to matter, so, too, profoundly, had the words.

I mean, the things one sees in Warsaw these days, walking down the streets or watching TV: "Doctor Zhivago" being serialized, "Children of the Arbat" published officially, video-rental outlets hawking "Rambo" and "White Nights" (along with soft porn and Bon Jovi). One of the main movie houses this spring was showing "The Bridge on the River Kwai," and I'm sure I wasn't alone in recognizing Alec Guinness there in the role of Jaruzelski. On the television news one evening, as part of a roundup of weekend recreational possibilities, there was an item on a touring wax museum in town from Italy, and we were shown a sequence, an Eisensteinian montage of wax tableaux: some movie-star mannequins (Marilyn Monroe, John Wayne), and then the famous freeze-frame of Yalta—Roosevelt, Churchill, Stalin, the camera zeroing in on Stalin's smiling face—and then, next scene, a wax effigy of Dracula sinking his fangs into the wax mannequin of a ravished damsel. I did a double take. I was only slightly less astonished a few minutes later to find myself watching a dubbed version of "Adam Smith's Money World." Adam Michnik publishing aboveground in *Tygodnik Powszechny*, and, in *Konfrontacje*, another aboveground journal, the assertion that Lenin's New Economic Policy led inexorably to the Gulag. Some authors, some topics were still consigned to the underground publishing houses—Raymond Aron, Karl Popper, Khrushchev's memoirs, countless exposés of Katyn—but those houses were flourishing, and their books were for sale at outdoor tables in the Warsaw University's main courtyard. Clandestine editions of Václav Havel's newest play, "The Temptation," Jiri Grusa's "The Questionnaire," and Kazimierz Brandys' "Warsaw Diary" were all selling briskly in the bright noonday sun when I happened to pass by, as were illegally printed stamps for collectors which featured grotesque and sometimes obscene likenesses of Jaruzelski and his press spokesman, the voluptuously hated Jerzy Urban. The underground publishers had established video departments and were merrily distributing films that might otherwise have been banned—though in order to get a film banned you really had to push it. In addition, the underground publishers were generating their own videos, and at least one of

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these, a study of the brief but bloody 1946 pogrom of Jews returning from concentration camps to their homes in Kielce, in southeast Poland, had just been bought by Interpress, the government's own agency, for distribution abroad. Radio Free Europe and the BBC are no longer jammed, but, then, they're no longer quite so necessary. On most ordinary days, you might listen to them in the evening if you happened to miss the paper.

To be sure, the underground press still plays a vital role. When something really important comes up—the recent strikes or Chernobyl—it's the underground press that is on the story right from the start, with the most complete and reliable information. (With the official press these days, it's amazing what gets published, but it can still be disheartening to see how long that sometimes takes.) Furthermore, the underground network still serves as a sort of backstop, a corrective. It keeps the official media relatively honest and compensates when they're not. In short, the underground media have a crucial role as part of the mix. But the point is that the mix these days is remarkably free and breezy.

And that's where the contrast with 1980-81 is so striking. During the Solidarity time, speech had suddenly come unstoppered, it was free—but it was far from breezy. On the contrary, it was fraught with an overwhelming intensity. More than anything else, Solidarity, in the passion of its first bloom, was a revolution in naming—calling things by their true names; digging up long-warped historical truths and burnishing them, restoring their true form; revelling in that form. During 1980 and 1981, *to say was to do*. In retrospect, it sometimes seems that the things said then may have proved to be the period's most important and lasting accomplishments.

In the first months of martial law, the authorities tried to beat back this revolution in saying: to get people to stop talking; to smash the various incipient forums for persistent truthtelling. But somewhere along the line the authorities got smart. In essence, they realized that it didn't matter what people said or read as long as the regime prevented them from *doing* anything about it. It was possible—and this was the great innovation in totalitarian practice which the Polish authorities brought about during the mid-eighties—to maintain a firebreak on the near side, rather than the far side, of truth. Indeed, in a strange way, doing it that way was even more *effective*. (Or, at least, it has proved so up until now.)

Not only doesn't this regime care about what its subjects say—it doesn't care about what they *don't* say. The Freedom and Peace movement, or WIP, as it's known by its Polish acronym—a sort of Polish Green Party and perhaps the hottest of the new young groups—had been displaying remarkable success in its campaign of encouraging conscripts to refuse to swear allegiance, as part of their required oath, to the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. At first, the regime was jailing people left and right, WIPers were going on hunger strikes, the Western peace movements were telexing their protests—it was all becoming one big mess. But then the regime wised up, and a couple of months ago it simply dispensed with that whole section of the oath altogether.

"Free speech at first seems wonderful, especially for the intelligentsia," Jan Litynski, the Solidarity theorist and a KOR veteran, told me. "But it can lead to social frustration. If you can say anything but it means nothing, that leads to apathy. We used to think of the System as a wall consisting of bricks, which you could take apart—by truthtelling, among other ways—brick by brick. But now it seems more like a rubber barrel: you hit it, and it bounces back. In its capacity for self-defense, the System seems more elastic than anybody could have expected. It turns out that it can survive freedom of speech, since talking and writing, by themselves, don't change anything. And this engenders hopelessness." He paused for a moment, and added, "But, surely, this must also signal the end of the System." He didn't sound altogether sure.

"It's not enough to give an abstract right without the means, the ability, to use that right," Halina Bortnowska, a leading activist from the Nowa Huta region, told me. "Our relative freedom today is not safe, because it's not guaranteed by the rule of law. Rather, it's a freedom because of laxity in the law, an unwillingness to apply new laws, which on paper are getting more and more severe. The good laws, too, get ignored. If you don't apply the laws, you can make as many as you like. There's much less responsibility involved in making a law. Everything is softened. And the regime seems to like it that way."

"Words can lose their weight," Tomasz Jastrun, a fine poet and an opposition essayist, remarked to me one day. "For poetry, this is especially dangerous, because in poetry words are very thin." (Jastrun was speaking from out of that membrane-thin, overpoweringly resonant Polish tradition of Czeslaw Milosz and Zbigniew Herbert, Stanislaw Baranczak and Adam Zagajewski.) "The regime's success is that it has tamed the truth. The truth, a few years back, was still a fierce lion. The authorities have domesticated it, they've housebroken it. The process goes back to the Solidarity time, when so many truths were spoken and nothing happened. Right now, I happen to be writing a book about the 1964 'Letter of Thirty-four Intellectuals,' in which those people were calling out for greater freedom of expression. It was nothing, two delicate sentences—*nothing!*—and it was an earthquake."

Back in the days when words were still achievements, the movement seemed able to express itself in a single voice—a single crying out against the regime: "Solidarity Ten Million Solid." Now, with everybody talking but otherwise separated—and nobody having to measure his or her speech against any actual consequences—the movement seems perpetually on the verge of disintegrating in a babble of political crosscurrents. Against a movement that runs the gamut from proponents of Milton Friedman to disciples of the young Marx, and whose polemicists are attacking each other as often as anyone else, the regime is able to present itself as just one more possibility. Contradictions abound and start to constrict.

In the weeks since my return to the States, the Soviets have held their June Party Conference, and all the reports streaming out of Moscow have been celebrating the astonishing openness of recent political discourse there. I find myself remembering the comments of one of my Polish informants. "What can Poland gain from *perestroika*?" he asked me rhetorically. "To impose Soviet *perestroika* here we'd have to go back ten steps. We're years beyond

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perestroika." For those who would interpret recent developments in Moscow, his words seem cautionary.

"But, surely," as Litynski said, "this must also signal the end of the System."

SUDDENLY, in the middle of August, Poland was in the news again. Miners at the July Manifesto coalpit near Jastrzebie, in Silesia, walked off their jobs, raising the relegalization of Solidarity as their first demand; in subsequent days, they were joined by miners from other pits and by dockworkers in Szczecin, on the Baltic Coast. It was hard to tell how things would play out: a strike—or a strike's suppression, for that matter—always takes weeks to unfold. But back in New York I was recalling my conversations with Polish unionists.

In Warsaw this past spring, when you asked the activists about the future, they'd taken to assuring you that May was by no means the end of the movement—that after a period of regrouping they'd be back, all the stronger for this momentary setback. If you said, "Fine, but *when*?" the Warsaw activists tended to become vague: they'd shrug, mumble old aphorisms about the rightness of the moment—they'd become shy. Ask the same question in Gdansk, and you were likely to get a specific reply: "Late August." I must have asked ten activists in Gdansk and received the same, almost cocksure definitive answer: "Sooner than they think, at the end of the summer, around the time of the anniversary"—the anniversary of the August 31, 1980, agreement that launched Solidarity—"when the new wage scales kick in. In late August."

Back in Warsaw, they weren't so sure. "Precisely because there's such a consensus up there on late August," my editor friend commented, "I don't think anything major can happen in late August. None of the truly significant upsurges in Polish history have ever been predicted. In fact, the sheer unpredictability of all those upsurges is their most consistent feature. Precisely because everybody's saying 'Late August,' the authorities ought to be able to mobilize their various tricks and stratagems for late August, if for no time else." She paused for a moment, took a drag on her cigarette, and then smiled. "But it's coming."

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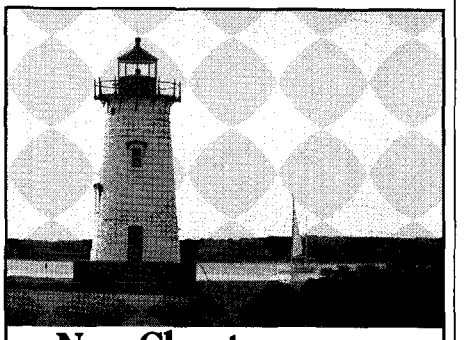

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ANNALS OF SPORT

IN PRIME TIME

CITIES often run on a combination of power, money, and ego, but sometimes they can run on pure hype, as Atlantic City did in late June, in the days before Mike Tyson fought Michael Spinks for the undisputed heavyweight championship of the world. The man most responsible was Donald Trump, who owns two profitable casinos in town and is building a third, modestly called the Taj Mahal. Trump appears to be in love with certain words, including "plaza," "success," and "celebrity," and he'd probably stamp his name on clouds and flowers if anybody gave him a chance. Around Manhattan, he gets mixed reviews for his architecture, but in New Jersey he is regarded as an economic messiah, and could put up a skyscraper in the shape of a boxing glove and never hear a complaint.

For the right to host the Tyson-Spinks extravaganza Trump paid eleven million dollars to the promoters, outbidding several gambling interests in Las Vegas. This sounds like a bold entrepreneurial stroke, but it isn't, really, when you've got the bank account to back it up. Trump understands Americans and shares their passion for statistics, for size and volume, for sheer mass in preference to anything abstract or foreign. A heavyweight title match carries with it a huge freight of expectations, and people anywhere near one tend to go crazy, dreaming big dreams and throwing away their money at the gaming tables, as if they were determined to prove that losing, too, can be conducted on a grand scale. But whatever the psychology the Trump Plaza casino stood to benefit substantially on the action, as did every other casino, while Trump himself could recoup his original investment simply by selling tickets to the fight.

To a developer, Mike Tyson must have looked like the human equivalent of an earthmoving machine. He is the finest boxer to emerge in more than a decade, and he's so ferocious in the ring that old-timers are already pitting him in imaginary bouts against the immortals. Could he have beaten Jack Dempsey? How about Joe Louis? At the age of twenty, in 1986, Tyson became the youngest heavyweight champ in history by knocking out Trevor Berbick in the second round. (He won the World Boxing Council's version of the belt; Spinks held the International Boxing Federation's version.) He has a solid, compact body, as dramatic in its muscularity as the bodies of the little plastic superheroes you buy in toy stores. When he hits his opponents, you can see ugly welts rise on their skin, like hives—Tysonitis, it's called. If he pounds on your arms for six minutes, you can't lift them anymore; after nine minutes, you wish they'd just fall off.

One reason Tyson is so dangerous is that he fights to protect a sweetness inside him. According to intimates, he has a nasty temper and sometimes gets quite angry, banging walls or furniture, but more often he's kind, gentle, and playful. He speaks with a slight lisp, is sensitive, intelligent, and emotionally complex. None of this did him any good while he was growing up in a Brooklyn slum, so he learned to hide it behind a fierce warrior's mask, going about his muggings and robberies with a wild, untroubled glee. His fellow gang members nicknamed him the Fairy Boy, no doubt as a backhanded homage to the contrast between his refined nature and the violent acts he performed in the streets. The violence comes out in his bouts, and it's frightening to witness, because it seems to take control of him like a ghostly possession and push him over the edge.

In Atlantic City, there may have been nobody as scared of Tyson (or, at least, of Tyson possessed) as Michael Spinks, who spoke openly of his distaste for boxing and admitted that he was only in it for the profit. He, too, is a sweet man—an all-night dancer, a fancier of stylish hats and clothes. But Spinks does nothing to conceal the affectionate side of his personality, perhaps because he is ten years older than Tyson and has already been humbled by the sort of suffering that Tyson is just beginning to experience. Spinks' common-law wife died in a car crash some years ago, leaving him a daughter, on whom he dotes, and he has almost lost his brother Leon to the fight game many times. In 1978, Leon was the heavyweight champ, a conqueror of Muhammad Ali, but he spent his earnings on high times and had some brushes with the law. The cops picked him up for driving without a license, and once he was found in a motel room, groggy, robbed of all his cash, and missing his false teeth. People in boxing referred to him as Neon Leon. Even now, despite Michael's financial support, he totters on the brink, flying off to box in nowhere towns, taking a beating and putting his health in jeopardy for very small purses.

So in Leon Michael might have seen another ghost—the ghost of what he could become if he took too much punishment from Mike Tyson. Spinks was thirty-one years old, his knees were shot, and his muscle tone was going. His flesh had a jiggle to it, a tremor of middle age. He had never been a natural heavyweight but, rather, a light-heavy pumped up by a special regimen of diet and exercise. No wonder, then, that whenever Spinks showed himself in public he seemed shy and diffident, as if to say, "Hey, let's not take this boxing business too seriously, hear?" His manager, mouthpiece, and closest ally, Butch Lewis, had to do his bragging for him, and Lewis did it eagerly, leaping toward the most inconsequential microphone with all the energy of an entertainer starved for the spotlight. And there was nothing Michael could do to stop him, even if he'd wanted to, because the machinery of hype was turning, and Butch was part of the machine.

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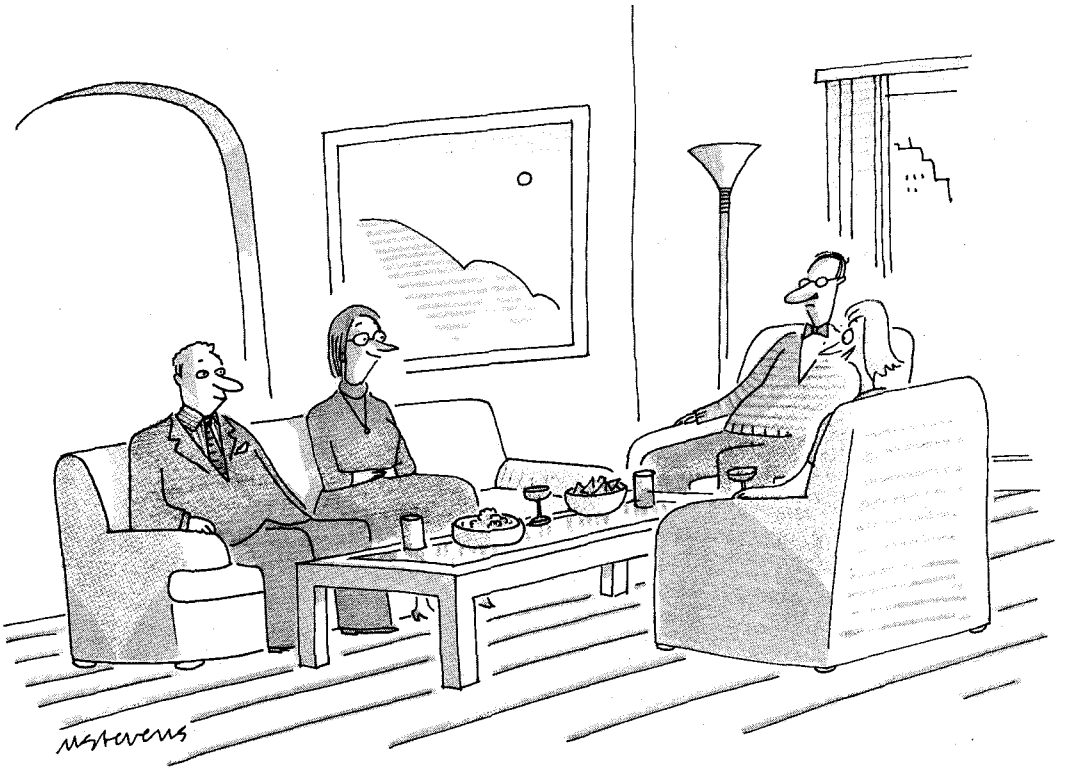
The numbers always went out first, on a letterhead emblazoned with the Trump Plaza crest, a red oval festooned with gold leaves and topped by a crown resembling a Beefeater hat. Mike Tyson was grossing about twenty million dollars from the fight, and Spinks was grossing about thirteen. In addition, the Tyson camp had picked up a million more for a series of Diet Pepsi commercials. Tyson was also in the middle of an eight-fight contract with Home Box Office, which gave it the right to broadcast his bouts, live or on tape, for about twenty-six million dollars. (The contract was null and void if Tyson ever lost.) HBO is a subsidiary of Time, Inc., so perhaps it wasn't a coincidence when Tyson appeared on the covers of *Time*, *Life*, *People*, and *Sports Illustrated* just before the match.



"I met Leo in San Francisco in 1967. He had flowers in his hair."

• •

But hype aside, who could blame the fans for being fascinated by a contest that looked so competitive on paper? After all, Michael Spinks was no tomato can; he'd never lost, in thirty-one professional fights. As a pumped-up heavy, he'd beaten Larry Holmes twice, and he'd knocked out Gerry Cooney, who outweighed him by thirty pounds. Spinks had never been K.O.'d, and he had a reputation for trickiness —the Spinks Jinx, which he laid on other boxers to mess with their heads. Stand up and trade punches with Tyson? No way, José. Spinks would skip and glide, he'd jab, he'd put on his tap shoes and dance, dance, dance. If the fight went the distance, all twelve rounds, he might even win a decision. Stranger things had happened in boxing, which has always been the strangest sport around.

IF Mike Tyson didn't exist, you get the feeling that Seth Abraham, who made boxing a star attraction at HBO, might have invented him. Abraham grew up in the shadow of Ebbets Field, and though he's in his early forties now, he still has a boy's enthusiasm for games, and plays basketball with friends at least twice a week. Stocky and competitive, he has the look of a man who'd sink his teeth in your calf at half-court and not extract them until his team was ahead. His office is decorated with jock paraphernalia, and he has many photos of himself with baseball and boxing greats, the very royalty of sports. He works hard, cares about his family, loves the pulse of New York—the pulse of *making it*—and doesn't pretend to be a genius.

It was a stroke of luck, in fact, that woke Abraham to boxing's potential as a TV spectacle. One night in 1979, shortly after he joined HBO as a programmer, he went to a hockey game at Madison Square Garden and found his attention flagging when four Philadelphia Flyers left the ice to attack some fans with their sticks. Picking up a newspaper, he flipped to the sports section and noticed an item about the trials of Marvelous Marvin Hagler, a dynamite middleweight. After almost fifty pro bouts, Hagler was at the top of the heap, yet he couldn't get a shot at a title. Abraham thought he knew why. For one thing, Hagler was a lefty, and in boxing circles that's the same as being a Martian: lefties confound righties; they go about their business backward, like reflections. Also, Hagler was a "black" black man. He had no glitter or panache, no Ali jive, nothing to soften his message, so his appeal was limited.

A fighter who transcends such barriers is known in television as a crossover. For instance, there's Sugar Ray Leonard. He is dapper, cool, polished, bright, and handsome enough to make an audience forget about his color. It's possible for a middle-class white person to imagine Sugar Ray living next door, in a nice suburban neighborhood, wearing a funny apron and having barbecues, maybe inviting over Ali and Ray Mancini, and the three of them going out later for Cokes and a round of miniature golf. Who'd want to play miniature golf with Marvelous Marvin? He had a shaved head, a baleful stare, and an attitude toward his job that came strictly from the loading dock. But Sugar Ray was different—not abrasive or threatening.

The three big TV networks are always looking for crossovers, but such fighters are uncommon, so boxing is often treated as filler material at ABC, CBS, and NBC. It forms a connective tissue between unrelated sports events on slow weekend afternoons in spring and fall. A programmer tosses in one nobody hammering another, then cuts

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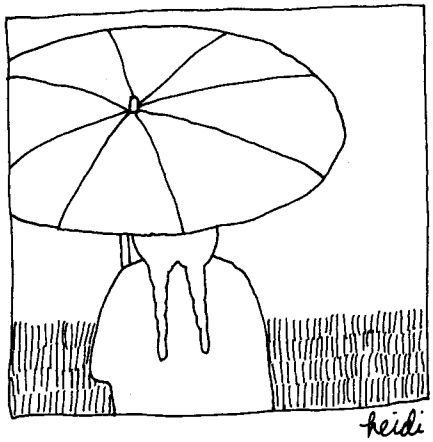
to a dogsled race in Alaska. But it dawned on Abraham that there had to be a way to sell a wonderful boxer like Hagler to the public. Could it be a simple matter of packaging? What if you did some features to prove that Hagler had an engaging side, even a back yard and a couple of children? What if you hyped the next Hagler fight as if it were a major movie? And then Abraham took it a step further: What if Hagler fought in prime time?

There was something wonderfully basic about the idea. A boxing match popped into a slot opposite a hit Saturday-night sitcom had to draw viewers, because viewers would think it *had* to be important. So in September of 1980, right before Hagler beat Alan Minter for the world middleweight title, HBO signed him to a one-million-dollar contract to fight three times the following year. In January, Hagler demolished Fulgencio Obelmejias, and then he took on Vito Antuofermo, a rock-headed Italian from Bari, in June. The two men had met before, in 1979, when Antuofermo held the title, and though Marvelous Marvin labored for fifteen rounds like a fellow busting stones with a pickaxe, all he got was a controversial draw. That was bad news for him, but it allowed Abraham to sell the rematch as an even bigger event, since it had overtones of a mythic Western now, with a gunslinger setting out to avenge himself, hoping to win back what he had been robbed of by the law. In front of an ecstatic home-town crowd, in Boston, Hagler won decisively in five, and went on to fulfill his contract by knocking off a stubborn Mustafa Hamsho that October.

Over the next few years, HBO's packaging became more sophisticated. The network added cameras, it added closeups—sweat dribbling down a fighter's chest, blood trickling from an eye. Knockouts were shown in slow motion, so that fighters stumbled around in an oddly balletic way, like drunken Baryshnikovs. Some trainers agreed to wear mikes, and when they exhorted their charges between rounds, pouring ice water down their trunks to wake them up, the fans got to listen in on the lies. "You're way behind, kid," a trainer might say glumly. "If you don't finish this guy off next round, you ain't got a chance in hell. You'll be pumping gas for the rest of your life, you understand?" HBO hired its own judge, who sat at ringside and passed judgment on the wisdom of the regular judges. Its announcers dressed in tuxedos, as if they were attending an opening-night performance at Lincoln Center instead of a battle in which two men were trying to beat each other senseless.

From the start, the ratings for HBO's fights were fairly good, but it was clear to Abraham that heavyweights drew best. This confirmed a boxing adage: the sport rises or falls depending on the relative strength of its heavyweight division. A big man with power, somebody who has the ability to reverse his fate with a single blow, can carry the entire fight game on his shoulders. A champ should seem indestructible, prepared to defend the United States against its enemies. Going back over the records, you could see that boxing hit its last peak with Muhammad Ali; since then, Larry Holmes had been the dominant figure, but he had no charisma.

So HBO was more than ready for Mike Tyson. He was that rarest of athletes—somebody who had the talent, the brains, and the desire to grow into the ever-widening space the media were willing to create for him. His story, too, was full of melodrama: how he'd been rescued from a life of crime by the wily old trainer Cus D'Amato, who'd once guided Floyd Patterson, another poor black kid, to a crown; how D'Amato had moved Tyson to the Catskills, into a creaky Victorian mansion where Cus lived with a sister-in-law and a half dozen young boxers in training; how he'd taught Tyson to be disciplined and use his anger productively; and how he'd brought in a protégé, Jimmy Jacobs, a man known for his honesty, to serve as Tyson's manager. It was Jacobs who orchestrated Tyson's earliest bouts, in 1985, matching him against men who had no real chance to win; and when Tyson knocked the men out—eleven of fifteen in the first round—he'd return triumphantly to his corner, where Jacobs would give him a congratulatory kiss.



Who could resist such a tale? Jacobs had done a perfect job of building up his fighter and showing off his destructive power. Eager to sign Tyson for his symbolic value, Abraham invited him to take part in an HBO elimination tournament to unify the weirdly trifurcated heavyweight crown. (In addition to the W.B.C. and the I.B.F., the World Boxing Association offers a title. The three organizations are widely disrespected and known as the Alphabet Boys.) Starting in 1986, champs had been meeting challengers, and the two boxers who survived would confront each other in the summer of 1987. If the tournament had a problem, it was with the supporting cast. Among heavyweights, there were too many worthless contenders who would have to be included—guys who refused to train, who smoked dope and sniffed powders, who ate so much that they became as pudgy and soft as infants.

But Abraham went ahead with the tournament anyway. In spite of having a contract with everybody, he was worried about things going well, since boxers have a habit of pulling out at the last minute. Boxing, he'd learned, was like no other business—its allegiances changed not by the month or by the day but by the microsecond. Its rule of thumb was to screw the other person before he screwed you; a deal was good only until a better deal was offered. And so it happened that Butch Lewis withdrew Michael Spinks, because Spinks could earn more money by fighting against Gerry Cooney, a Great White Hope. (Cooney's manager, Dennis Rappaport, assumed that Spinks would lose.) Lewis had a legal right to do this, but only on the condition that the winner of Cooney-Spinks re-enter the tournament—a condition Rappaport would not accept. Forced to choose, Lewis took the bigger payday.

Abraham was disappointed and upset, but he had a grudging admiration for Lewis. Butch was a tireless self-promoter, an operator who sometimes wouldn't shut up, but he'd done what was best for his client. If Spinks had stayed in the tournament, how much would he have made for taking on

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Tyson? Maybe four million, tops. Now, in Atlantic City, he was getting three times as much. But admiration aside, HBO had to sue Butch, which meant, by the legal traditions of boxing, that Butch was obligated to sue HBO. The fight game had turned Abraham into an expert on litigation, and he'd come to believe that a fight wasn't really big unless at least two lawsuits were pending. For fun, he had tried to figure how many suits the current Tyson-Spinks bout might generate, and he'd arrived at an amazing number—eight. Holy cow, Abraham thought. The fight must be a monster.

TO Mike Tyson the notion of getting embroiled in legal matters was new. He had little formal education, and was an intuitive man, who knew things to be true if they felt right. As an innocent young fighter, he'd entrusted his money and his contractual affairs to Cus D'Amato; and when D'Amato died, in 1985, a year before Tyson beat Berbick for his first title, the trust was passed to Jimmy Jacobs and his partner, Bill Cayton. But Jacobs, too, was ill, struggling with leukemia, and he finally succumbed in the spring of 1988, at the age of fifty-eight. In a way, Jacobs' death severed Tyson's link to the forces that had formed him. When Tyson talked about Cus, he used words that described a guru; he saw his transformation from gutter punk to warrior in mystical terms. Jacobs had played the role of a worldly instructor. He had a large collection of fight films, and he tutored Tyson in the sport's history, its legacy of brilliance and woe, staying up with him until the wee hours—an uncle trying to convey the meaning of greatness to a kid who had never before been given the chance to understand.

More important, D'Amato and Jacobs had taught Tyson that affection, even between men, has a place in human affairs. It was a double-edged gift, for to drop the mask and risk affection is to risk being hurt. And Tyson was having to learn this on his own, in full public view, without the sort of buffer that his mentors had provided. In February of this year, he had married Robin Givens, a beautiful young actress, whom he'd pursued through the night clubs and parking lots of Hollywood like a hunter chasing a trophy. "I suaved her," he jokingly said to people when they asked him how he'd won her hand. He glowed in her presence. Even in his wildest fantasies Tyson could not have imagined himself with such a woman. Givens was petite, fine-boned, and breakable; she had graduated from Sarah Lawrence, and knew something about literature and art; she had poise and social grace, and could walk into a crowded restaurant and make a headwaiter shiver. These were powers that Tyson didn't possess. When she told him she was pregnant, he babbled about how he couldn't wait for the baby, how he wanted to put it in a Snugli and carry it around on his back.

Meanwhile, he had to watch his marriage dragged through the muck of the tabloids. The first accusation was always that Givens was after his money; the second was that she was after publicity. There were rumors that she had got pregnant just to trap him; and then, when she was reported to have miscarried, there were rumors that she hadn't been pregnant at all. A sister of Givens claimed that Tyson had been abusive, and he was also supposed to be running around with other women, while simultaneously spending a million dollars a month on jewels and trinkets for Robin. How do you make sense of the nonsense? In certain ways, Tyson *was* immature; he argued with his wife, and made mistakes, and sometimes did things he wasn't especially proud of, just as everybody else did. His spiritual fathers, Jacobs and D'Amato, were gone. He was grappling with his nature, growing, changing, striving to become an individual in his own right; and, for the effort, the world was stomping on his heart.

All the scrutiny seemed to bring Tyson closer to his wife, and to his mother-in-law, Ruth Roper, who is a successful businesswoman. Both women are known to be tough, thorough, and ambitious, and under their urging Tyson took an interest in his financial affairs for the first time, asking to see Cayton's books. In another sport, the request might not have created a stir, but black boxers who ask questions, particularly about matters that are usually handled by white men, go against the stereotype, for boxing is still in large measure a relic of the plantation system. Other black athletes have broken out of the mold, but fighters are still seen as magical beings who make up for their lack of intelligence

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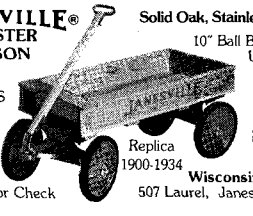

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by performing astounding feats of courage, strength, and sexual prowess. Too often, fighters believe this; and the belief is the seed of their undoing.

Since Jimmy Jacobs' death, Bill Cayton had been Tyson's sole manager. Cayton is a seventy-year-old white man, and he has always been a model of probity. In a sport where fleecing is routine, his clients have always been treated fairly and wisely. Tyson, for instance, could retire and live like a potentate forever on the investments that Cayton has made for him. But Cayton slices off a third of his fighters' earnings, which is the standard cut in boxing—a fee that may seem steep if you compare it with the twenty-five-per-cent cut that a personal manager takes from a TV actress. (Cayton would contend that a boxing manager incurs heavier expenses.) Also, Cayton has the demeanor of a front-office man. Where Jacobs playfully wrestled with Tyson, schmoozing with him, trading some sweat back and forth, Cayton keeps his distance.

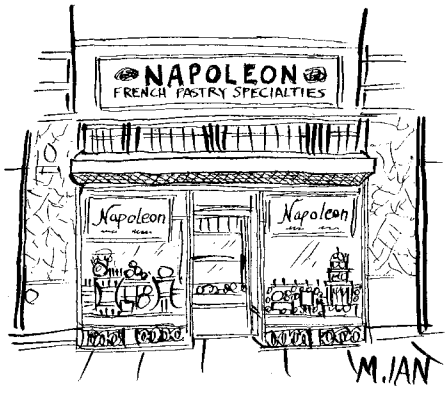
Because Cayton had nothing to hide, he opened his ledger to Tyson's representatives. He even implied that he'd be willing to accept a smaller share of the profits in the future. But Tyson had been through the wringer lately, and he wasn't in a trusting or conciliatory mood. Cayton blamed Don King, the promoter, for this—King, of the discombobulated tongue and electrified hair. Cayton felt that King had been meddling, promising impossible things to Tyson, as he did to other boxers. Yet King's empire was built precisely on the fact that he could sometimes deliver the impossible—not always but sometimes. For every story about the evil Don King there was a story about the benevolent one, and in his dealings with black fighters King did not have to sympathize, empathize, editorialize, or summarize: he had the advantage of *being* black.

So as the Spinks fight approached, Mike Tyson felt himself stretched a little tight. It was an odd moment for him, a moment when the mind drifts out of its ordinary grooves. He wasn't an innocent anymore. A punch to the stomach might not harm him, but life itself was turning painful—it lacked its former clarity. Tyson hated it when people insulted his wife, and he had wept over his inability to prevent it. Boxing had once been a pure joy to him, a means of escaping from oblivion, but it was on the verge of being ruined. The fight game, he might have said, was like prostitution: you do it for love first, and then you do it for a few friends; then you do it for the money.

THE Atlantic City Convention Center is on the boardwalk, right next to Trump Plaza, and the day before the fight, a Sunday, workmen were still doing some carpentering to expand its capacity to twenty-two thousand. A ringside seat went for fifteen hundred dollars; a seat in the highest balcony, up in the rafters, cost a hundred. From the cheap seats, the ring had the look of a scrap of paper someone had dropped; against its surface, boxers would have the dimensions of a couple of specks of ink. The hall itself was huge and dimly lit—an eerie, echoing space that felt like a set for "The Manchurian Candidate." All you could hear was the slight ripple of bunting, the ping of hammers, and the occasional whine of a drill.

Because the bout was being carried live in about thirty foreign countries, including Paraguay, Gabon, and the Cayman Islands, there were a few international correspondents sitting in the ringside seats, comparing notes or watching an HBO technical crew drag cables around. Two Japanese fellows in black cardigan sweaters were practicing golf swings with invisible clubs. A little sportscaster from Great Britain, his socks scarcely touching the cuffs of his trousers, paced up and down an aisle rehearsing a line he would use the next night. "In less than an hour," he said, speaking into a rolled-up program, "the most eagerly awaited sporting event in history will take place in this lovely old seaside arena, where the queens of American beauty have always been crowned."

HBO was only airing a delayed broadcast of the fight, but it had a contract with the promoters to provide a live feed that would go out to closed-circuit venues, such as theatres around the world, and to pay-per-view cable-TV outlets in homes. This was a nightmarishly intricate task. It involved synchronizing large amounts of information and file film; it involved data processing, computer graphics, and cathode rays bouncing off satellites, then rebounding toward thatch-roofed hotels on the west coast of Africa. The technicians were all veterans of boxing productions, but they were still feeling the pressure, and when a reporter by the ring suggested that they bring in a keg of beer one of the grips replied that several hits of LSD would be more appropriate.



Around four o'clock, during HBO's camera check, Donald Trump walked into the hall. It was possible that he had been drawn to the spot by a magnetic force emanating from the eleven cameras; he seemed addicted to standing in front of lenses. The curious thing was that he didn't appear to be comfortable; there was a military aspect to his bearing, as if he were operating under orders from some mysterious government. In private, he could laugh and tell a joke, but his public expression was the half smile of a man making a brief stop on the way to an appointment. A major parlor game among journalists in Atlantic City was trying to detect Trump's fatal flaw. Vanity? Insecurity? If you had a billion dollars, the argument went, would you aspire to a friendship with—of all people—Malcolm Forbes? But it was doubtful whether Trump thought in those terms. His single, overriding interest seemed to be power.

With an aide, Trump toured the floor. The bodyguards who accompanied him at his hotel, two beefy lads in low-key suits, were nowhere around. Trump chatted with technicians, shook a hand here, a hand there; he had a bit of the common touch. His manner was miles from lighthearted, yet you could imagine him in politics; in fact, he had exactly the sort of blandness that had thrust so many others to the top. But if he really dreamed of being a senator someday, or even a President, why was he dabbling in such iffy businesses as gambling and boxing? Strolling to a ringside area called the VIP Corral, Trump sat on a folding chair in the front row. He had reserved the seat for Frank Sinatra,

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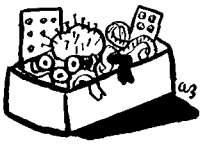
and he became concerned when he found that it didn't offer a clear line of sight. The ring was too high, and even if Sinatra tilted his head, he wouldn't be able to see the boxers' legs or any of their fancy footwork.

So HBO's executive producer, Ross Greenburg, was summoned for a consultation. Greenburg is in his early thirties, but he was fielding so many questions and problems that he was aging fast. Outside the hall, some cops were complaining about a cable across the boardwalk, and, inside, some union guys were refusing to turn on a bank of lights. For days, Greenburg had been in negotiations with Butch Lewis, hoping to be granted permission to put a mike in Spinks' corner, but Lewis's dislike of HBO was so vast that little progress had been made. There would be no in-depth coverage of Spinks, no film segments about his daughter or his back yard, absolutely nothing to hint that Lewis had surrendered any of his contempt for the network that was dragging him into court.

At Trump's request, Greenburg sat in Sinatra's chair. He agreed that the line of sight was bad, and then pointed out, quite delicately, that this was often the case at fights. But Trump explained that he couldn't take a chance on Sinatra's leaving after a round or two. "Lower the ring, Ross," he said. A certain amount of blood drained from Greenburg's face. *Lower the ring, Ross:* here was Donald Trump in action, the Donald Trump of best-seller lists, made-for-TV movies, and the Wollman skating rink. His philosophy was simple, direct, and incontestable—do the job right or don't do it at all. If you find a mistake, correct it. Damn the expense, the red tape, the eleven cameras that would have to be repositioned, damn the union guys on triple time—hey, what did the union guys care, they were glad for the extra cash. Almost immediately, they went to work with their screwdrivers and wrenches, disassembling the ring. Down came the ropes, down came the stanchions. It was like watching an illusion unravel. But then, in only thirty minutes, as if by magic, everything was back together, and the ring was indeed lower by a foot.

THERE is a special look of fear a boxer gets when he knows he's going to lose, and Michael Spinks had it when he stepped into the ring on Monday night. His eyes were shifty, glazed over with a peculiar and suspect defiance. His knees were bandaged, his breath came hard, and his head was hanging. He was sweating heavily. At ringside, you could almost hear his nerves crackling. It seemed as if he might bolt at any moment, leaping over the ropes, dashing up an aisle, and not stopping until he was home in Delaware. Perhaps the only thing keeping him in place was the thought that he was about to earn thirteen million dollars.



Talk of money was again in the wind. For the record, Donald Trump had announced that the live gate had exceeded twelve million dollars, and was the largest take in boxing history. (The drop at Trump's casino increased by almost twenty million dollars.) Almost every seat in the hall was occupied, but the crowd was an odd one, unnaturally quiet for a fight. In the balcony, you found a dense concentration of hard-core fans—fellows from Trenton and South Philly who'd driven over in a van with a case of beer and could name all the heavyweight champs since John L. Sullivan, the Boston Strong Boy. But around the ring you bumped into uninterested high rollers, who had been comped in by their casinos, and in the VIP Corral there were many celebrities who didn't know a right cross from a double cross.

This made for a curious atmosphere. The hall felt like a mixture of Elaine's, the old Copacabana, and Madison Square Garden on a slow evening. It was easier to get a sense of excitement on the boardwalk, or over in Trump Plaza, where people without tickets were imagining a supercharged version of the event which was really a reflection of their own desires. Everybody was after a piece of the fight, a souvenir of some sort, whether it was a T-shirt, an official program, or a blurry snapshot of an actor climbing from a stretch limo. You saw teen-age girls from the city's bleakest housing projects wobbling around on high heels, all jangly earrings and provocative stares, hoping to meet someone who was linked to the scene—not Mike Tyson, of course, but a person who worked for him, or who knew a person who worked for him, or maybe just a person who resembled Tyson and could be mistaken for him on a dark street. Here was the old dream of being discovered, then swept up from the boredom of ordinary life and dispatched in a carriage to a party like Donald Trump's, where the guests drank Dom Perignon and signed their names in a guestbook marked "Celebrities."

Mike Tyson remained oblivious of the turmoil outside. He was in a dull, drab dressing room with his trainer, Kevin Rooney, and a few close friends, trying to concentrate on the task at hand. Earlier in the day, his legal troubles had escalated. He'd sent a letter to Bill Cayton contesting the validity of their contract, and that could only lead to further lawsuits, unless Cayton settled out of court. But Tyson had the discipline of a professional, and he put the letter out of his mind. Instead of worrying, he shadowboxed, listened to loud rap music on a radio, and danced around in his underwear, thinking about Cus D'Amato and what it meant to be a warrior and reminding himself that he wasn't afraid to die. All great fighters hold this belief, but they don't hold it forever, because the body isn't invincible. But Tyson was still young, his body was strong and undamaged, and the more he danced the better he felt, for he was approaching a moment of purity. Once he was on his way to the ring, all the hype would disappear, the troubles would evaporate, and he would know his true purpose again.

While Tyson was putting on his gloves, an observer from the Spinks camp noticed a slight irregularity on one of them and reported it to Butch Lewis, who went to the dressing room and lodged a formal complaint. Nobody knew why Lewis was exercised about a tiny lump of tape that couldn't possibly affect the outcome of the fight. Was he trying to annoy Tyson, to break his rhythm and concentration by making him wait longer to enter the ring? Or could it be that Spinks was so petrified and sick to his stomach that Lewis needed to buy him some time? No matter: Tyson refused the bait and controlled his anger, throwing two wicked punches into a wall, *bang-bang*, as if to demonstrate the inevitability of Spinks' demise. And then Spinks was out there before the crowd, dripping and dissolving; and Tyson followed him in a minute or two, wearing no robe, just black trunks and black shoes,

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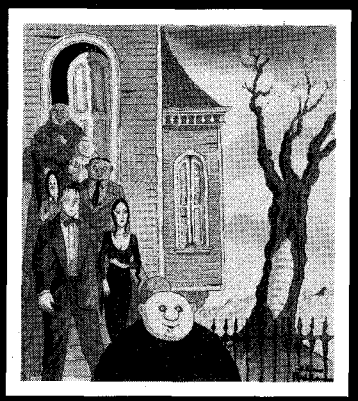

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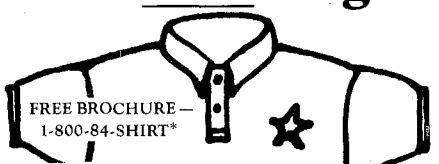

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The introductions went on and on. Celebrities of every stripe and persuasion got up to take a bow. Old men, bald men, battered fighters, pretty women—but not Frank Sinatra, who had stayed away. The only celebs to be booed were Robin Givens and the Yankees' George Steinbrenner. To the public they were schemers, egotists, entirely untrustworthy—whereas Muhammad Ali was rewarded with a standing ovation. In boxing, Ali is a much-loved and tragic figure, someone who combines in his person all the sport's attraction and all its excesses. He had fought with immense daring and skill, he had charm and wit, but he had fought too long, taken too many punches. Now he moved slowly, and his quicksilver mind was cloudy; he suffered from Parkinson's syndrome, having received thousands of subconcussive blows to the brain. When he stopped in the challenger's corner, what did Spinks see before him but another object lesson, another ghost?

With the fight about to start, Spinks knelt in prayer while Tyson, his eyes bright, accepted a hug from Rooney. The bell rang, and Tyson took a couple of happy little skips and then came predictably forward, not with any special wildness or speed but with a determined, methodical step that again spoke of the inevitable. He was in no hurry; he'd take his time and enjoy himself. Spinks was prepared for this, of course. His strategy, which he had practiced during his two months of training, was to keep moving, so that Tyson wouldn't have an easy target. He was supposed to be slippery, to dart at Tyson from different angles, jabbing at him, confusing him, wearing him down, but for some reason he didn't stick to his plan. Instead, he came forward, too, like a kid marching to a woodshed for a spanking, trying to minimize his punishment by being cooperative.

He never even landed a decent punch. Hampered by his bum knees, he seemed a bit unsteady on his feet, and Tyson immediately hit him with several good shots that rattled his composure, throwing in an illegal left elbow to the chin for good measure. "Knock it off, Mike," the referee warned, but Tyson was already moving forward again, clicking into gear. About a minute into the round, he pushed Spinks to the ropes and nailed him with a hard left to the jaw, following it with a solid right hook to the chest. The force of the blow was immense, and Spinks, a boxer who had never lost as a pro, dropped to one knee, just as he'd done when he was praying. It was the first time in his life he'd been on the canvas. Surely he'd cool out, take a long count, and spend the rest of the round backing away and recuperating, but again he defied the logic of the situation, rising at the count of three and standing there flat-footed, as if to ask for more of the same. He took three uncertain steps toward Tyson, then led with an amateurish right that left him wide open. Tyson hopped on the opportunity, bringing his own right hand up in an arc, catching Spinks flush on the side of the head, and cutting his legs out from under him.

Spinks toppled, falling backward. His shoulders struck the canvas first, and then his head landed with a thud and bounced twice. His eyes were open, and they looked more terrified than squirrelly. Who knows what he thought about as he lay there under the lights? Maybe nothing—a fighter who has been knocked down sometimes drifts along in a semi-conscious state. But maybe Spinks was remembering his brother Leon and reminding himself that he didn't really have to get up, since he had nothing else to prove. Tyson had a reputation as a superhuman puncher, so why give the crowd further evidence that an average man couldn't tolerate his blows? As Spinks began to collect himself, he seemed to be making no serious effort to continue. A hungry boxer thrashes around in such circumstances, unwilling to surrender, but there wasn't anything in Spinks' fumbling to suggest that he was going to give it another shot.

From the bell to the knockout, ninety-one seconds had elapsed. Ninety-one seconds—the time it takes to brush your teeth! You could hear lots of grumbling in the ringside seats as fans tore up ticket stubs and kissed fifteen hundred bucks goodbye. Some of them had dashed off to buy a beer at the last minute and then discovered on

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their return that the fight was already over, and it didn't help that Spinks was now on his feet, grinning sheepishly, being congratulated—for what, people wanted to know. Butch Lewis was at his side, and Lewis might well have been chuckling to himself, for he'd guided his man to a big payday and had also handed his enemies at HBO a dog of a match. Across the ring, Don King was chasing Tyson, insinuating himself into photographs, and Robin Givens, in a fiery crimson dress, was squeezing between the ropes, assisted by Donald Trump.

At prizefights, sadness is often a primary emotion, but usually it's reserved for the loser. Yet before Mike Tyson threw his arms wide in victory a look flashed across his face that made one worry about his future. It was a flicker of disappointment, even of bafflement, as if for years he'd been hiking up a mountain, only to find on reaching the peak that it afforded him no view, no sunshine. Why had he bothered to climb it? Tyson lived to box, but he had defeated every opponent, and there was no real challenger on the horizon. So what would his new life be like, where were its passion and its promise? Instead of hanging around at a gym, trading quips with D'Amato and Jacobs, he'd be trapped in office buildings with attorneys and accountants, and he would spend his days idly, maybe shopping for cars or real estate, and trying to be a decent husband to a woman he was still getting to know. His sweetness would have to be kept under wraps, because he was tougher than ever now, the undisputed heavyweight champ, which was supposed to be a blessing, and not a curse.

—Bill Barich

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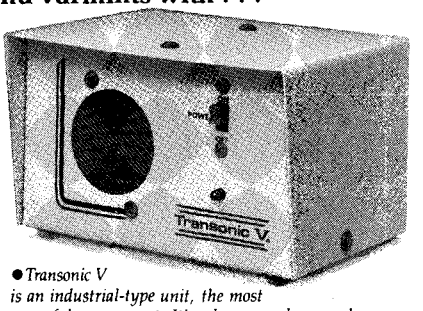

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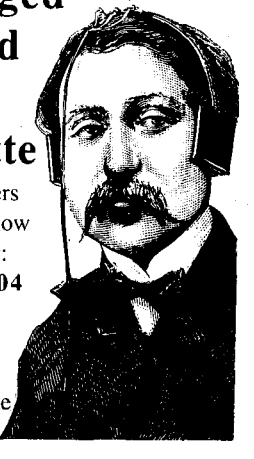

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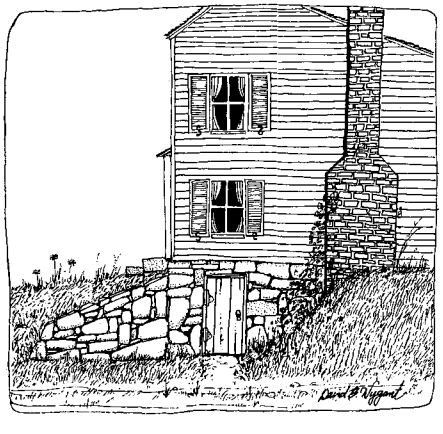
AROUND CITY HALL

TRANSGRESSIONS

MAYOR EDWARD KOCH likes to point out that there are a hundred and seventy-five distinct ethnic and religious groups in this city, and that New York has, for example, more Jews than Jerusalem, more Puerto Ricans than San Juan, and more Irish than Dublin. If Massachusetts Governor Michael Dukakis should be elected President, the fact that local residents of Greek heritage claim that there are more of them in New York—mostly clustered in and around the Astoria section of Queens—than there are in any other city except Athens will be another item often boasted about. When Dukakis attended the annual Bronx County Democratic dinner last May, the band in the Imperial Ballroom of the Sheraton Centre played not only Neil Diamond's "America"—later a big favorite at the Democratic Convention in Atlanta as well—but the theme from "Zorba, the Greek." Everybody knows that hotel waiters are the least emotional characters in general circulation, but at the Sheraton Centre that night dozens of them—a large share of whom were Greek-Americans—massed on either side of the door Dukakis came through, applauding, cheering, and, in some cases, wiping tears from their eyes. The Zorba theme was a nice change from the theme from "Rocky," which was played constantly during the 1982 gubernatorial campaign of Mario Cuomo, the first Italian-American to be elected governor of New York. In that campaign, his struggle to defeat his opponent, the popular and much better-known Koch, was seen until almost the end as a hopelessly losing battle. "That's 'Rocky II,' " Cuomo kept reminding his supporters—that is, the movie in which the Italian-American underdog boxer comes out a winner. In his 1986 reëlection campaign, bands, at Cuomo's request, usually broke into not the Rocky theme but "America." When Koch arrives at a political dinner, the theme is routinely "New York, New York"—the one about if you can make it here you'll make it anywhere.

It's wise to keep not only a sharp ear out but a sharp eye on the ethnic political world, because it's constantly changing. In Nassau County, on Long Island, just across the border from the city's heavily Democratic borough of Queens, the Republican organization is the most powerful in the state. For some three decades now, its bosses have been Italian-Americans. The predecessor of the current chairman, Joseph Mondello, was Joseph Margiotta, who left office after being convicted on federal extortion and mail-fraud charges, for which he served one year of a two-year term. In view of all the convictions of Democrats in the city's corruption scandals and in the recent Wedtech case in the Bronx, Democrats in this area tend to work Margiotta's name into the conversation as often as possible. Recently, a class-action suit was filed in Nassau County, by the Center for Constitutional Rights, urging measures to remedy the fact that there were no black or Latino representatives on the board of Hempstead, which is the county's largest township, and about fifteen per cent of whose population is made up of members of minority groups. A couple of weeks ago, Republican Chairman Mondello, who is also the Hempstead presiding supervisor, introduced a surprise element into the case. He had mentioned in a radio interview, Dick Zander, of *Newsday*, pointed out, that his mother was born in Puerto Rico and was "a hundred per cent Spanish." Mondello's message to the court complainants seemed to be "You have met the minority-group representation and it is me." This new aspect of Mondello's ethnic heritage had been unknown to most of his constituents. Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer, who is Hispanic, found the development



rather comical. Ferrer is living proof that no bad deed is without its benign consequences. For nine years, beginning in 1979, the Bronx, which is nearly two-thirds black and Hispanic, had had as its borough president Stanley Simon, who was the political creature of the Bronx Democratic boss Stanley Friedman. Although Koch, Friedman's close political ally, had mentioned the desirability of having a member of a minority group as the Bronx borough president, he had always supported Friedman's man, Simon. This worked out very well for the Mayor: in voting on the Board of Estimate, on which both served, Simon almost invariably went along with Koch's wishes. Once, during some ceremony in City Hall's Blue Room, a reporter asked why Simon, and not some less obliging borough president, was at the Mayor's side having his picture taken. Koch gave Simon a public hug and said that the reporter was "trying to come between us." Simon's mentor, Friedman, is now serving a twelve-year sentence in a federal prison in Missouri for corrupt activities in connection with a city contract. In March, 1987, shortly before Simon was indicted in the Wedtech case on racketeering and extortion charges in which the securing of a favorable city lease was involved—charges on which he was convicted earlier this month—he resigned his borough presidency. With both Friedman and Simon out of the picture, Ferrer, then a city councilman, was allowed to take over at Bronx Borough Hall. His comment on Joseph Mondello's recent revelation about his roots was "Welcome home, brother."

Mondello's news was a reversal of something that happened in the nineteen-seventies, a few years after Herman Badillo became the first Puerto Rican member of Congress. Badillo began turning up at events given for Italian-American members of Congress. He had discovered, he said, that some of his ancestors had come from Italy. Nothing has been heard lately about Badillo's Italian ancestry. The former Bronx congressman, now privately practicing law, is waiting to see what his reward may be for being the most prominent local Latino to support Dukakis. One of the setbacks to Koch's political fortunes in the New York Presidential primary last April was the Hispanic vote. For many years, the Mayor had made a point of the fact

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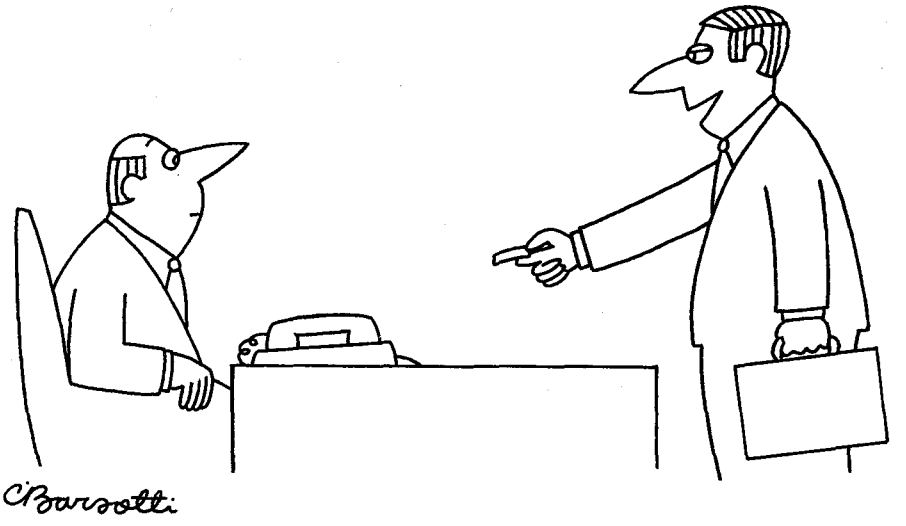
that although he sometimes came out on the short end of the local black vote, he did very well among Hispanics. In April, however, sixty-three per cent of the Hispanics voted for the Reverend Jesse Jackson, whom Koch had savaged during the primary campaign.

THE most prominent local figure convicted in the Wedtech case this month was seventy-year-old Mario Biaggi, a ten-term Democratic representative from the Bronx. In 1973, Biaggi, a former city cop, ran for mayor, but his campaign foundered after revelations that he had taken the Fifth Amendment before a grand jury investigating local corruption and after the raising of questions about certain episodes during his Police Department days. As far as is known, he is the only candidate for mayor of New York who ever went on television to deny that he had once bitten a man's ear off—and to add that he could prove it by the autopsy report. In the Wedtech case, Biaggi was convicted on fifteen felony counts, including racketeering and extorting close to two million dollars' worth of Wedtech stock in return for his political influence. The case was prosecuted by the office of United States Attorney Rudolph Giuliani. Giuliani, a Republican, is said to be weighing the possibility of entering next year's mayoral election against Koch, who has been noticeably weakened politically the last few months. In 1985, he won seventy-eight per cent of the vote in the general election. According to a *Times*-WCBS TV poll, taken late in June, only twenty-seven per cent of New Yorkers would vote for him again. If Giuliani were to run against Koch, he would have ample access to documentary evidence of City Hall corruption, since his office also prosecuted Stanley Friedman. For local Republicans to choose Giuliani as their mayoral nominee would surely demonstrate to former Attorney General Edwin Meese that New Yorkers—even New York Republicans—play by bizarre rules. Assistant United States Attorney Edward Little, during his summing-up in the Wedtech proceedings, described Meese as "a sleaze." After the verdict, Giuliani said he had approved in advance Little's remarks about their powerful superior at the Justice Department, and "it's as if I'd said them."

"A thug in a congressman's suit" was the prosecution's phrase for Biaggi in the Wedtech trial, which resulted in his second conviction in a year. Last November, he was sentenced to two and a half years in prison and fined five hundred thousand dollars for obstructing justice and accepting an illegal gratuity from the former Brooklyn Democratic boss Meade Esposito. The popular Biaggi has been close to the Mayor, making television commercials for him and supporting him in most of his campaigns. So far, Koch has not supported anyone in the race to succeed Biaggi. After Biaggi's second conviction, the House leadership scheduled a September 7th meeting, at which his expulsion from Congress was considered inevitable. He saved his federal pension by resigning on August 5th. However, complex state election rules made it difficult to remove the twice-convicted felon's name from the ballot before the September 15th primary. Consolation gatherings in his home district had the air of campaign rallies. The band even played the theme from "Rocky."



"At lunch today, sir, I got a fortune cookie that was obviously meant for you. Can you guess what it says?"

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DEMONSTRATING how confusing ethnic politics can be, some of the most heartfelt comments on Biaggi's fall came from New Yorkers of Irish descent. "FAREWELL MARIO" was the headline over an article in the *Irish Voice*, which referred to Biaggi as a "beloved figure," and said of local dinners given by Noraid, the agency here that raises funds for the Irish Republican Army cause, "The mere mention of his name . . . was always the occasion for a standing ovation." Biaggi's appearance in the St. Patrick's Day parade always drew loud applause. Although only about six per cent of his former constituents are Irish, a large share of them are ardent believers in the cause of the I.R.A., whose battle cry, "Brits out of Ireland!," is routine discourse in their neighborhoods. Biaggi was the founder and chairman of the House Ad Hoc Committee for Irish Affairs, whose operations are frequently deplored in the British Parliament and press. It is a prevalent British view that Irish-Americans are a powerful political influence in this country, and particularly in the Northeast. It is true that, generations back, nearly all members of New York's Board of Aldermen—the predecessor of the City Council—were Irish. Someone is said to have played a trick on one of them, introducing in his name a resolution that City Hall be hung with flags and bunting in honor of Queen Victoria's birthday, causing his resounding defeat in the next election. Today, however, only a handful of Irish-Americans in the city hold elective posts. The last Irish member of the Board of Estimate, Paul O'Dwyer, left office in 1977. His brother William, New York's last Irish mayor, resigned in 1950. Indeed, the elected official who gets an even bigger hand than Biaggi in the annual St. Patrick's

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Day parade here is another non-Irishman: Mayor Koch, who, as it happens, has just returned from a trip to Ireland.

Koch has marched in the parade every year since he's been mayor. Proclaiming that his name is O'Koch for the day, he usually wears a white sweater, bought years ago in Ireland, and a tweed cap, and at intervals shouts "Brits out of Ireland!" to the cheers of the spectators. Over the years, Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan and former Governor Hugh Carey, and even the late Terence Cardinal Cooke, have been booed on St. Patrick's Day because, in backing negotiations to end the bloodshed in Northern Ireland, they condemned violence by members of the I.R.A. as well as by British troops stationed there. Thanks to Koch's less complex "Brits out of Ireland!" policy, he has never been subjected to this indignity. Irish-Americans have rewarded him with eighty-one per cent of their vote—no small boon, since, by some estimates, they account for as much as twelve per cent of the electorate. The most memorable occasion on which the Mayor sent the British the "Brits out!" message was in the summer of 1981, when he demanded that they "get the hell out of Ireland" just before he stepped aboard Malcolm Forbes' yacht, Highlander, for a luncheon cruise with Prince Charles. After the cruise, the Mayor called the British policy in Northern Ireland "an abomination," and said that if Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had been aboard he would have taken it upon himself to "sock it to her." He added, "Nicely, of course."

The trip to Ireland in which the Mayor took part last month came about because on the morning of this year's St. Patrick's Day parade newspapers carried reports of the lethal grenade attack on mourners at the Belfast funeral of three Irish Republican Army members who had been shot by members of the British Special Air Service. John Cardinal O'Connor, in his homily before the parade, proposed that "hundreds of thousands" of Irish-Americans join him in a pilgrimage to the shrine of the Blessed Virgin at Knock, in the Irish Republic, to pray for an end to the bloody confrontations in Northern Ireland. From the start, he insisted that in order to be effective the trip must be seen as unpolitical. In the end, only a few hundred pilgrims

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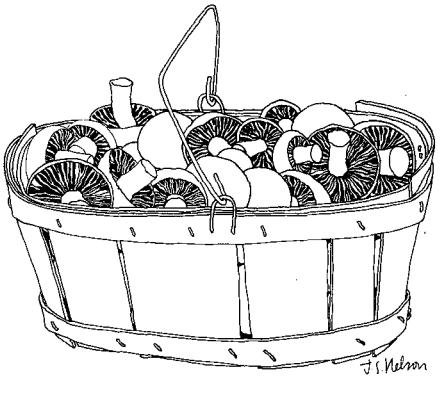
made the journey, among them the non-Irish-American Mayor, and he got to Ireland the day before the Cardinal. By the time O'Connor arrived, Koch had already delivered some politically biased judgments, stating, for example, that certain British actions in Ulster had caused Britons to be ashamed of their legal system. When the Cardinal arrived, he remarked to reporters in teasing—and yet not quite teasing—tones that his good friend the Mayor, who had already got his picture in the papers, had invited himself on the trip, and that he himself had thereafter heard frequent reports that "the Mayor is going on a trip to Ireland and taking me with him." After the Cardinal's remarks, Koch, famous for his short attention span, sat through fourteen hours of prayers and was a model of deportment for the next four days. Marcia Kramer, the City Hall bureau chief of the *News*, who was one of half a dozen New York reporters to go along on the trip, pretended to credit "the miracle of the Shrine of Our Lady of Knock" for the fact that "Mayor Mouth" had spent all those days in Ireland "without offending anyone, saying the wrong thing or creating an international incident." On July 26th, however, after he said goodbye to the Cardinal, who was remaining in Ireland a bit longer, the Mayor was suddenly his old talkative self. His message about Northern Ireland was now greatly changed. The day before, at Stormont Castle, the British government headquarters in Belfast, he had had a twenty-five minute briefing on the Ulster situation from Tom King, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland. It was evident that the Mayor had found the Briton's version quite persuasive. At a breakfast interview in Dublin with the New York reporters, just before he flew home, Koch praised the British for their "good attitude" and "constructive role" in Northern Ireland. "I do not believe that the British are occupying forces," he said. "I think they're here more from the point of view of safeguarding the peace and preventing what—if these people were Jewish—would be called pogroms. I do not believe that they deserve the castigating that many of us, myself included, have heaped upon them." The headline in the *Post* here the next day was "EDDIE GO BLAH!"

The reaction in England was, understandably, one of astonishment. The *Daily Mail* praised the "sidewalkwise Mayor" for his open mind. The London *Times* offered him its congratulations. In Parliament, Prime Minister Thatcher said that she welcomed his remarks, adding, "And I admire his forthrightness in making them." Prominent Irish-Americans in this city were also astounded. Indeed, Charles (Joe) Hynes, the special state prosecutor who is a longtime supporter of the Catholic cause in Northern Ireland, and is thinking of running against Koch for mayor next year, described himself as "thunderstruck." Paul O'Dwyer called Koch's sudden change of view "abnormal, to say the least," and suggested that "he needs help." Peter King, the controller of Nassau County, who has been a grand marshal of the St. Patrick's Day parade, said that to allow Koch to march up Fifth Avenue in his Irish sweater would "make a mockery of the event." By praising the British in Northern Ireland, said King, the Mayor had "perverted his office" and should resign. Meeting in convention in Cleveland, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, which presides over the St. Patrick's Day parade, voted to condemn the Mayor. At City Hall, the day after his return, the Mayor asked, during a press conference, "Doesn't truth have relevancy anymore?" During a ceremony that evening to dedicate the site of a Korean War memorial in Manhattan, he was overheard saying to Sir Crispin Tickell, the British Ambassador to the United Nations, "You can't tell the truth. Look what happened when I talked about Jesse Jackson."

THE reason the Mayor was in Northern Ireland last month was that he was not in Atlanta. He had not been named a delegate to the Democratic Convention—the first time anyone could recall that this city's top official had no formal role in such a gathering of his party. The Democrats in charge in Atlanta had no interest in risking a Convention spectacle that might to any degree rival last April's intensely divisive New York primary. Instead of the primary's star performers being the three candidates on the ballot—Dukakis, Tennessee's Senator Albert Gore, and Jackson—the dominant figure was Koch. His high-decibel attack on Jackson not only as anti-Israel but as a liar, a coward, and an unstable person whose policies would bankrupt the country in three weeks and leave it militarily defenseless in six has now, of course, become a grotesque chapter in American political history. Although what Koch saw as his tell-the-truth-about-Jackson campaign turned out not to be a winning strategy for any of his purposes—Jackson took the city, Dukakis took the state, and the Mayor's candidate, Gore, ended up with only ten per cent of the vote—the Mayor was publicly indignant about Dukakis's not arranging to have him named a Convention delegate. "I think it would have been in everybody's interest to have had me invited," he said. At one point, he suggested that in not inviting people like himself the Democrats could be risking the loss of New York City and New York State. In the former, the risk is not great: the last Republican Presidential candidate to carry this city was Calvin Coolidge, in 1924. When it was clear that Dukakis was not going to have a change of heart, the Mayor did not see the suddenly free days as an opportunity to contemplate ways of resolving some of the immense problems facing the city government. "Atlanta won't have me to kick around," he told City Hall reporters—not, apparently, resisting the historic allusion. "I don't believe that the mayor of the city of New York should ever be a political spectator at a convention. That would mean I would be on the outside with my little nose pressed up against the window. . . . Naw, that's not . . . my style." Instead, he would be off with the Cardinal to Ireland, where—at least, at the end of his visit—he was at center stage. The announcement of his destination caused Manhattan's Representative Charles Rangel, in the past Koch's occasional ally in the black community but now active in the coalition to decide on a candidate to run against him next



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year, to say of the Mayor's destination, "Ireland's loss is Atlanta's gain."

THE reason the Mayor was in the Netherlands last month was, again, that he wasn't in Atlanta. The O'Connor pilgrimage didn't begin until four days after the opening day of the Convention, so Koch's presence at City Hall during that time would be a reminder that the country's top Democrats had snubbed him. He accepted a long-standing invitation to visit Amsterdam at Dutch expense. The host city may have concluded that his visit was not worth the cost. The day after Koch got there, he attacked the local mayor for allowing marijuana to be sold in coffeehouses, accusing him of being "soft on soft drugs." A spokesman for the mayor of Amsterdam suggested that this was not polite behavior on the part of a guest, paying or otherwise. He was too polite to point out that the Mayor's own city is often described as the crack capital of the world. Apparently one problem with getting used to being the absolute center of attention, as Koch is at his own City Hall, is that one comes to expect an abiding public interest in any and all events of one's personal life. Koch explained to reporters in Amsterdam that he had tried marijuana himself long ago and, he said, "I puked." (Last month, after the stringent anti-smoking law went into effect here, Koch told reporters at City Hall that after he stopped smoking, in 1952, he had lit up a few times. "It made me feel like puking," he said.) Fortunately, the Mayor also had some other ideas about making news during the Netherlands leg of his summer vacation. Everywhere he went there, Dutch reporters asked him, embarrassingly, why the Democratic mayor of America's biggest city wasn't in Atlanta. (The same question kept coming up in Ireland.) Soon after his visit began, the Mayor made an announcement: he "wouldn't hesitate" to campaign with Jesse Jackson in the drive to elect Michael Dukakis. He may have hoped that this proposal would cause a stir in Atlanta, but that's not the way things worked out. Jackson did not bother to respond. Jackson's campaign manager, Gerry Austin, said he doubted whether any such tandem campaigning would ever happen. On the other hand, he said, "Jesse has always believed in redemption." During the New York primary, when Koch kept mentioning Jackson's 1984 reference to New York as "Hymietown," Jackson pointed out that he had apologized for that at the 1984 Convention, and said that surely there was such a thing as redemption. Last month, *Newsday* commented in an editorial, "Ed Koch says he now wants to make nice to Jesse Jackson. How touching. And how late." The editorial noted that Koch had never apologized to Jackson for his statements in the primary; he had said that his tone might have been too strident but his facts were correct. Jackson and his supporters "may require a flat-out apology," said *Newsday*. "Hard to blame them." From the Netherlands, the Mayor said that if Jackson refused to campaign with him it would only hurt Dukakis, and Jackson would "have to live with that." If Jackson's response to his offer was negative, the Mayor said that he would "turn the other cheek." He apparently saw the situation as desperate enough to violate a long-standing rule: he had explained on national television a few years ago that when somebody hits him, he hits back. Asked if he ever turned the other cheek, he said, "I'm not a Christian." After the Mayor returned from his vacation, an editorial in Harlem's *Amsterdam News* said that the paper had thought it would be helpful to get the contentious Mayor out of town, but that that had turned out not to be fair to the countries he visited. The editorial concluded, "He is our problem, and we must deal with him."

Within three days of his return, the Mayor had reversed his stand on the Northern Ireland issue once again. "It was an error to say that the British are not an occupying army," he said in a radio address, explaining that, of course, they *were* an occupying army.

He had "foolishly used an expression." It had been an "unfortunate use of language." A statement from his office said that he was now doing "what any honorable gentleman should do—admit my error, correct the record and say what I believe to be the truth." A formal apology for his error would go out to leading Irish-American organizations. Blacks were bound to contrast this near-abject response with Koch's continued insistence, four months after the Democratic primary, that although the tone of voice he had used against Jackson could have been more modulated, everything he had said was factually correct. The message seemed to be that he saw it as far more perilous politically to offend Irish-American voters than his black constituents.

A week after he got back, the Mayor met with nine local Irish-American leaders, including state legislators and City Council members, in his City Hall office. O'Dwyer and Peter King, who would have given him a really hard time, had not been invited, nor had Hynes, his possible opponent in next year's mayoral race. During the session, the visitors were generally polite, although Queens Assemblyman Joseph Crowley warned that the controversy, with the election ahead, meant that it would be "a tough year" for Koch. Outside in the corridors later, the visitors had sharper comments, although Queens Councilman Walter McCaffrey did not, as he had a few days earlier, compare calling the British Army a positive force to "saying Bull Connor was for peace and justice in Alabama in the nineteen-fifties." Al O'Hagan, the state vice-president of the Ancient Order of Hibernians, said, "We might forgive, but we'll never forget." The Mayor's quick turnaround and apology insured that Britons, when they heard of it, would be more firmly convinced than ever that Irish-Americans are a powerful political force in this area. The theory that Americans with Irish roots vote with one voice on the Ulster question is hardly borne out by election returns, however. After Moynihan and Carey were booed for their condemnation of I.R.A. violence, they were reëlected to the United States Senate and the Albany governorship by large margins. In the *Irish Voice* this month, an article by John Spain, under the headline "THE NORTH'S KILLING FIELDS," referred to "the sorry spectacle of Mayor Ed Koch apologizing

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profusely to the Irish Americans . . . for daring to articulate" what, Spain said, most people in the Irish Republic actually believe, which is that "the British army presence in the North is necessary until it can be replaced by something else to keep the killers on both sides apart." Koch, however, made it clear that he now saw his praise for the British as a transgression. Before the delegation of Irish-American leaders left his office, he told them that in a telephone conversation with O'Connor he had referred to his attendance at all those prayers during his trip, and had said to the Cardinal, "Surely, fourteen hours covers two sins, doesn't it?" Asked what the other sin was, besides his praise of the British, he mentioned Jesse Jackson, referring, it was assumed, to the attacks—or the *tone* of the attacks—in the primary. However the transgression against Jackson might turn out, Koch learned late last month that what he saw as his sin concerning Northern Ireland would not cause him to be barred from next year's St. Patrick's Day parade. A spokesman for the parade announced that the mayor of New York would always be invited—"his mother could be the Queen of England."

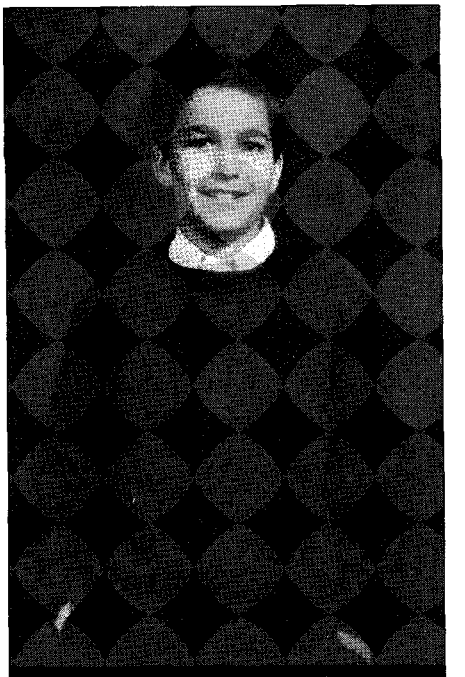
THE Mayor's efforts to achieve some degree of absolution—or, anyhow, a photo opportunity or two—in connection with his self-described sin against Jackson went nowhere until Cuomo moved into the picture. On August 1st, the *Times* reported on its front page that Cuomo had called Jackson and proposed a meeting with the Mayor, late in August, in the Governor's office to discuss possible joint campaign appearances for Dukakis. Jackson's response had been that he would have to hear from the Mayor directly. Reading about this in an early edition of the *Times*, Koch—to whom, apparently, everything is on New York time, or should be—called Jackson at 6:30 A.M. in Chicago to urge that the meeting take place. Although Cuomo cherishes his reputation as the Great Conciliator, the meeting could be a stormy one. Jackson had said that it should include a number of black leaders who have been at odds with the Mayor, among them Rangel and David Dinkins, the Manhattan Borough President, who is being urged to take on Koch in 1989. (The Mayor had had to call Dinkins that morning to get Jackson's number.) After the telephone conversation, Jackson told reporters, "In April, Mayor Koch closed the door and began to attack. We would not stoop to counterattack. If you don't bend over, those who kick cannot get a good angle. We stood up, and so he kicked and broke his foot. It was not good for the people." Jackson added slyly, "While I was being attacked, the bridge was collapsing"—he was referring to the Williamsburg Bridge—"and the numbers of homeless people were growing."

As the Mayor waited to see if Cuomo could bring about the rapprochement that would put Koch closer to center stage in the national campaign, instead of being consigned to the sidelines with his little nose pressed up against the window, he often said of Dukakis, "He needs me." The Jesse Jackson whom he referred to daily bore no resemblance to the monster of last April. Jackson, as the Mayor now saw him, was a man of high intelligence and charisma, with a great sense of humor and an admirable record on family values and the drug issue. In an interview on August 5th, he described Jackson as "a moral symbol." When a television reporter asked him how he could have found Jackson to be such a changed man in such a short time, Koch said, before turning on his heel, "My job is to elect Dukakis. Your job is to create controversy." On August 11th, Dukakis made his first appearance in the city since the Democratic Convention, to deliver a speech on defense policy at New York University. He was given a spirited introduction by Cuomo. Koch had not been invited to be part of the ceremony, nor was he introduced from the audience, though a seat there had been reserved for him. He explained to reporters later that he had not been asked to do anything in the campaign, although he had called and offered. "I, like anyone else, appreciate encouragement," he said. As for not being introduced, he pointed out that it *was* New York City "and the mayor has *some* relevancy." —ANDY LOGAN

•

He supported himself in the meantime by playing in cafes and restaurants, and playing violin for ten years as a violist with the orchestra of the Prague National Theater.—*Program note for the 1988 Cabrillo Music Festival, in Santa Cruz, Calif.*

Was the conductor tone-deaf?



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BOOKS

Voices of the Past

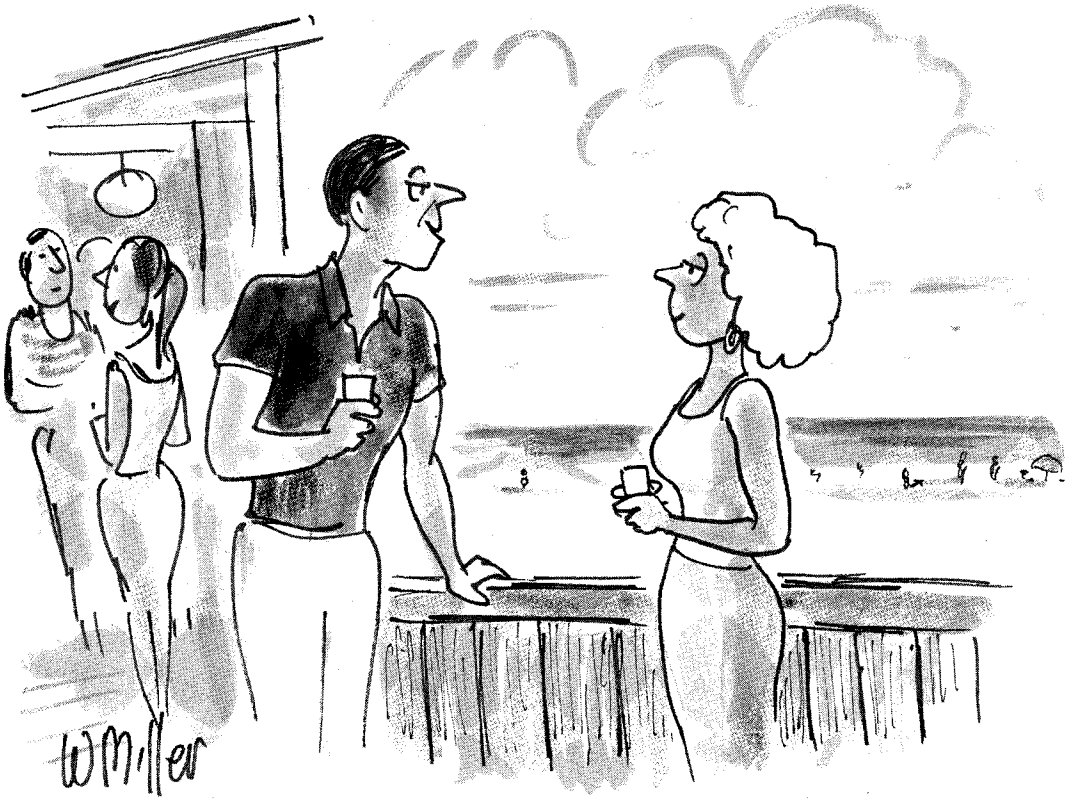
MOST biographies of performers struggle against the evanescence of their subjects' achievements, but two fine new lives—"Chaliapin: A Critical Biography," by Victor Borovsky (Knopf; $45), and "The Great Caruso," by Michael Scott (Knopf; $24.95)—persuade us of the durability of the singers' contributions. The authors demonstrate that the Russian basso and the Italian tenor were artists whose innovations have become our traditions. Borovsky, who was born in Leningrad and now teaches Russian literature and theatre in England, shows that Chaliapin's influence extended beyond opera to all the theatre arts; Scott, an English student of vocal music and its history, shows how and why Caruso created the modern tenor voice.

Read side by side, the books enhance each other, and gain strength from their inescapable coincidences. The authors have used some of the same sources, because the two singers performed in the same houses, coped with the same impresarios, appeared with the same colleagues, and were recorded by the same pioneering producer. They sang together in only two operas—Boito's "Mefistofele," at La Scala in 1901, and Gounod's "Faust," at the Metropolitan in 1908—but they liked and admired each other and occasionally met offstage.

Their early lives were strikingly similar. Both Fedor Ivanovich Chaliapin and Errico (later Enrico) Caruso were born in 1873, and both sets of parents, Chaliapin's in Kazan and Caruso's in Naples, were stock characters in the cast of poverty—abusive alcoholic father, and gentle mother worn down by need, childbearing, and the deaths of many children. Chaliapin's memories of hunger left him obsessed with food; Caruso reacted against his early experience of squalor with extreme fastidiousness. Both were sent to work as children, and got their basic musical training in church choirs. Each man suffered a paralyzing attack of stagefright at the very start of his career, and each went on to sing at a rate that should have wrecked his voice, but didn't.

Both singers won recognition quickly. At twenty-two, Chaliapin was signed by St. Petersburg's Maryinsky Theatre, one of Russia's two imperial opera houses. (Moscow's Bolshoi was the other.) He left the Maryinsky after a year and a half to join the Moscow Private Opera, an avant-garde company supported by an art-loving millionaire named Savva Mamontov. Its tickets were cheaper than the Bolshoi's and its aims more ambitious: to broaden the repertory (particularly to include more Russian operas); to foster ensemble performance; and to unify the design of each production. Chaliapin moved on to the Bolshoi in 1899—primarily, Borovsky thinks, because Mamontov could not afford a large chorus and a first-class orchestra. However, Mamontov encouraged Chaliapin to continue something he had begun, without encouragement, at the Maryinsky: to conceive his roles dramatically as well as musically. The author, drawing on Chaliapin's own writings and on the recollections of people who worked with him, recounts how Chaliapin developed his roles. He did not worry about vocal technique but used his voice as a means of impersonation, searching for inflections that would exactly convey a character's psychological state at every point of an unfolding drama. He sought clues in reading; he was a wide, enthusiastic, and discriminating reader. He also studied paintings, consulted historians, and observed people everywhere (he copied a scarf he wore as Don Basilio in "The Barber of Seville" from one belonging to a priest he saw on a train in France), and, searching for a characterization, asked himself some fascinating questions—for example, how Mephistopheles really feels about human beings.

At a guess, nearly half of Borovsky's book is devoted to descriptions of Chaliapin's performances or his work at creating his roles—considering and reconsidering every detail of gesture, stage business, costume, and makeup, and,



"But enough about my body. Let's talk about your body."

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insofar as a company allowed, of lighting and of other singers' performances. Borovsky takes care to tell us that Chaliapin kept working until he had focussed his discoveries and discarded all superfluities: he was noted for the economy with which he produced his effects. Chaliapin's criticism of the Moscow Art Theatre's occasionally misguided efforts helps clarify his own ideal:

> It's amazing how they want to simplify all the time. Moreover, they "act" simplicity, and the result nearly always rings false: I see an actor behaving "simply," "carelessly" unbuttoning his waistcoat, or whistling "simply," or "simply" shooing off a fly, and I can see that he has contrived all this simplicity. And you know, it suddenly becomes so complicated, trivial, prosaic details push the character into the background and interfere with the basic line.

This biography tells us little about Chaliapin's domestic life, perhaps because the singer's family did not much influence his art. Borovsky is more interested in Chaliapin's friendships with his fellow-artists and his relations with his "educated" and "progressive" (Chaliapin's adjectives) acquaintances —people who, Borovsky tells us, were devoted to the theatre because a performer could imply what the czar's censor forbade stating. Chaliapin's attraction to the theatre was not political but imaginative: his childhood response to seeing a clown was "Wouldn't it be wonderful *not to be oneself* for a while!"

His intellectual followers, however, insisted on reading political meanings into his casual actions. He was attacked, for example, for showing courtesy to his employer, the czar. Though no revolutionary, Chaliapin sympathized with the Revolution; he said, in 1933, "I thought that they really wanted the good of the people. I am after all a peasant, a moujik." Through his friend the writer Maxim Gorky he met the Bolshevik leaders, from Lenin on down, but Chaliapin found Bolshevism more oppressive than czarism, and left the Soviet Union in 1922. In exile, he suffered from homesickness: he went on loving his country and loathing its government, which spied upon him abroad and, at home, instigated rallies and subsidized articles calling him a weak, greedy traitor and a dried-up has-been. At the same time, Soviet leaders secretly kept trying to lure him back. He died of leukemia in France in 1938; in 1984, the Soviet government brought his body from Paris to Moscow for reburial.

Chaliapin said, "Caruso has a thousand voices, and each voice has such an abundance of colors and shades!" Unlike Chaliapin, Caruso had to work for his virtuosity: when his career began, both the quality and the range of the tenor voice were in transition. Scott tells us that they had been, off and on, ever since the tenor-soprano combination succeeded the castrato at the top of the opera register. Scott thinks that Caruso learned ease onstage with the help of the soprano Ada Giachetti—who was his mistress from 1897 until 1908, when she eloped with their chauffeur—and that he drew further dramatic inspiration from his 1901 appearance with Chaliapin.

The voice came harder. Its beauty had always been evident, but Scott, tracing the fortunes of the tenor voice through the nineteenth century, as both orchestras and opera houses grew larger, recalls that the falsetto and vibrato that earlier tenors had developed for earlier music were no longer satisfactory for the new, verismo operas of Caruso's time. He recounts the young singer's struggles during the eighteen-nineties to stretch his voice and to develop breathing adequate to support his highest notes. Scott's examination of Caruso's recordings—the earliest date from 1902—reveals that Caruso's technique as well as his artistry kept evolving throughout his career. (Both books include discographies.) Nonetheless, Scott maintains that from the beginning Caruso's records so convincingly overcame the problems of tenor singing at the start of the twentieth century that they redefined the tenor voice. He quotes the composer and pianist Sydney Homer, who was the husband of the contralto Louise Homer:

> Before Caruso came I never heard a voice that even remotely resembled his. Since he came I have heard voice after voice, big and small, high and low, that suggested his, reminded me of it at times even forcibly.

Although Caruso never found singing easy—he told one interviewer, "I strain myself to keep my voice from sounding strained"—he seems to have existed to perform. "I go from bed to work and from work to bed," he told another interviewer. In 1912-13, a typical season, he started work at the

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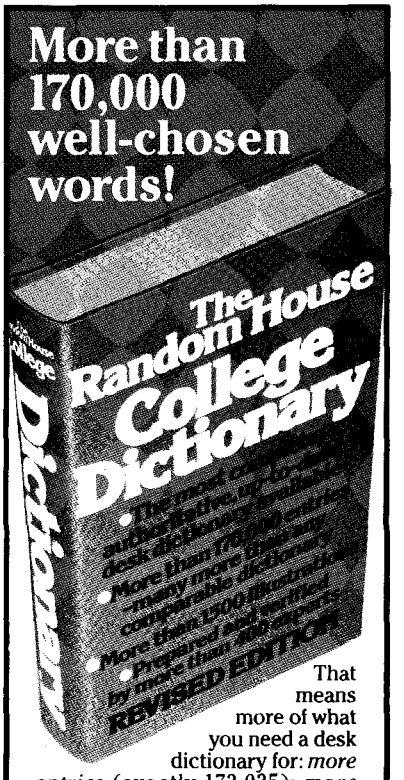

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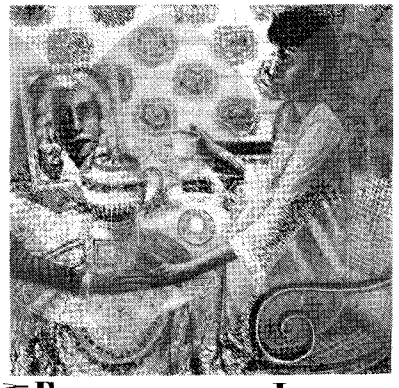

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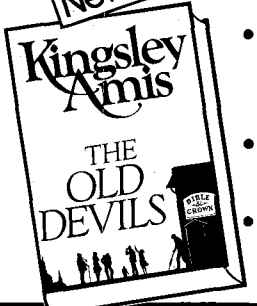

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Vienna Opera in September and sang his way through Germany, ending in October at Potsdam, where he sang for the German Empress's birthday. He opened the Metropolitan's season in New York in November, sang with the company until it finished its tour, in Atlanta, and gave a concert for the prisoners at the federal penitentiary there in April. In May, he was singing at Covent Garden. Scott tells us that Chaliapin, who was appearing in Diaghilev's Russian season at Drury Lane, visited Caruso backstage and warned him against overwork, but it is doubtful whether one obsessive ever heeds the advice of another. Caruso died of a systemic infection in 1921; Scott thinks he worked himself to death.

Caruso died before Mussolini came to power. We do not know if, like Toscanini, he would have chosen exile, nor can we guess how exile would have affected him. In 1904 he bought an estate in Italy, but by 1911 Italian newspapers were complaining that he had not sung in his homeland for more than eight years. His older son by Giachetti served in the Italian Army in the First World War, but Caruso recorded "Over There" over here. He married a young American in 1918, and we associate him with American folkloric events and figures: though he lost his costumes in the San Francisco earthquake, he saved his signed photograph of Teddy Roosevelt; and he sang for Helen Keller, who "heard" him by placing her fingers on his lips and throat. Caruso does not seem Italian in the way that Chaliapin remained ineradicably Russian; Caruso's real nationality was opera.

Both books are well written, though in different styles. Borovsky is expansive, at times sprawling, while Scott is crisp. The Russian author is sometimes bitter about Russian artistic politics, but, like Chaliapin himself, he is happiest in the theatre. There, his own expertise supplies a short course in acting and stagecraft. Scott manages to make his discussions of vocal technique comprehensible to the nonspecialist, and his goal of situating Caruso in the history of tenor singing involves tucking in a tidy retrospect of changes in musical taste. Both books show opera in ferment, and much of the two singers' repertory is unfamiliar to the ordinary American operagoer today. Chaliapin, who championed what were then modern Russian composers, managed to install "Boris Godunov" in the international repertory, but Borovsky describes his many telling impersonations —for instance, Ivan the Terrible in Rimsky-Korsakov's "The Maid of Pskov"—in operas that either did not travel or did not last. Caruso spent his early years performing in brand-new operas we never hear, in Leoncavallo's "La Bohème" as well as Puccini's. Scott tells us that the failure of many new operas in the early twentieth century impelled managements to revive older works, and so begin to shape the repertory familiar to us—the so-called "museum" repertory that reaches back to the eighteenth century. Scott regrets the drying up of the lyric or melodic impulse among opera composers, and mentions that the introduction of the microphone after Caruso's death segregated operatic from popular singing. Even so, popular music seems less tuneful today than it used to be; perhaps the earlier fading of operatic melody was prophetic. We have been used to thinking of melody as an indestructible cultural creation, like romantic love, but perhaps melody is like monarchy—the product of a particular period in Western civilization. What seems indestructible is the human need to dramatize emotion, a primitive urge that has taken its most complex form in opera. Chaliapin and Caruso, who met that need superbly in their time, were artists who, at any period and in any style, would have found a way to sing.

—Naomi Bliven

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With this crowd, there was great conversation. Jane Nathanson told Reagan-familiar William French Smith that she was hosting Michael Dukakis at a fund-raiser Thursday night, and "maybe you'd like to stop by." Conversation from another Michael, Douglas (a surely hot Oscar property), was a major source of talk—reports that he chatted with agent Sue Mengers about a book over chili, or that he was discussing his Lansing-Jaffe film in which hidden angers between Americans and Japanese more than surface.

Fred and Joan Nicholas, usually too busy on the dance floor for much talk, were confined to chatting because of his broken ankle. For once, the queen of party givers, Barbara Lazaroff, was very in the dark, as her husband, Wolfgang Puck, whispered plans for the surprise birthday party he was giving for her on Sunday aboard a chartered yacht.—*Marylouise Oates in the Los Angeles Times.*

Meanwhile, in the East conversation remains a lost art.

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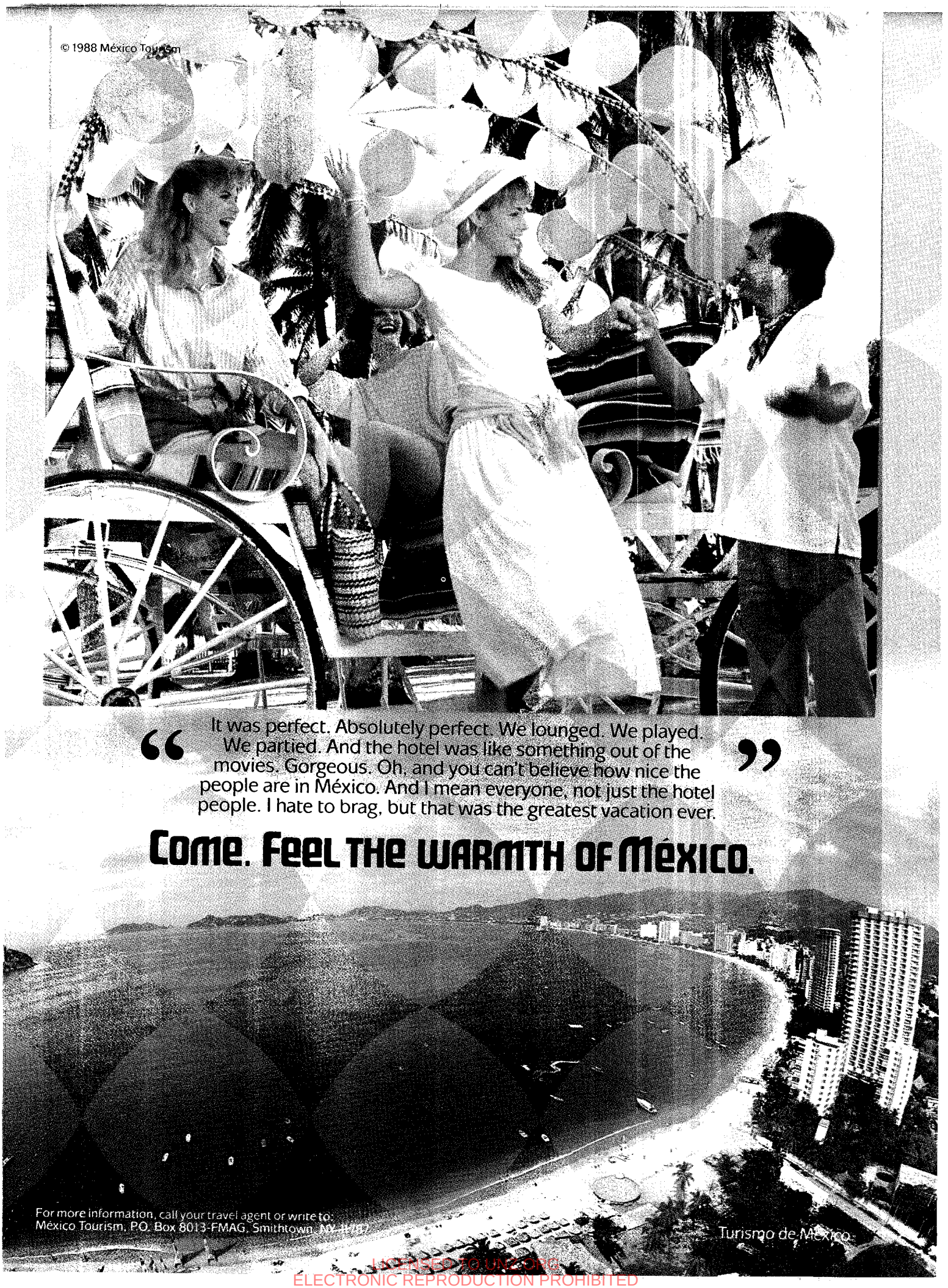
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